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THE

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND,

PAST AND PRESENT:

ITS HISTORY, ITS RELATION TO THE LAW AND THE STATE,

ITS DOCTRINE, RITUAL, DISCIPLINE, AND PATRIMONY.

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THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

BOOK IV.

THE CHURCH FROM THE REVOLUTION TO THE PRESENT TIME.

BY

REV. T. B. W. NIVEN.

BOOK IV.

FROM THE REVOLUTION (1688) TO THE PRESENT TIME.

CHAPTER XIX.

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A BRIGHTER day had at length dawned upon Scotland. The ravages of persecution were at an end. The inestimable blessing of civil and religious liberty seemed once more within reach of the suffering Presbyterians.

As soon as it was known in Scotland that William had landed, the condition of affairs was changed as if by magic. When the Dutch fleet had been driven back by stress of weather, as it had been when it first set sail, the bishops and clergy had despatched a loyal address to James, assuring him of their continued steadfastness, congratulating him upon the apparent discomfiture of the designs against his government, and hoping that his foot might soon be on the necks of his enemies. But when the landing actually took place, and it became evident that a revolution was imminent, the clergy became greatly alarmed for the safety of their church.

The Presbyterians, who had skulked in mountain fastnesses and moorland wastes for the last eight-and-twenty years, emerged again into the light of day. At first they bore themselves quietly enough; but when it was known that Claverhouse and Dalziel had fled to London, that the troops were disbanded, and that there was no longer any power in the country sufficient to pro-

tect the Episcopal clergy, they became more demonstrative. Not satisfied with having liberty to attend the conventicles as they pleased, they resolved to rid themselves of the presence of the men who had been the occasion of so much of their suffering. It did not greatly matter to them whether or not their proceedings were legal. At such times as these there are always unruly elements which are apt to show themselves. The students of Glasgow University burnt the effigy of the Pope, along with the effigies of the Archbishops of Glasgow and St. Andrews; but that was a comparatively harmless ebullition of youthful spirit.[1] By and by, however, the mob rose in Edinburgh, and demolished the chapel which had been fitted up at Holyrood for the Romish worship, rifling the shrine and burning the images in the streets. The houses of the Papists were searched and the symbols of their belief were carried off. Dishonesty had its hand in the work, and while many were doubtless prompted by mistaken zeal, many more were actuated by love of plunder.[2]

In the west and south of Scotland, where the persecution had been fiercest, the reaction was naturally strongest. The clergy who had been intruded into the pulpits of the outed Presbyterians began to tremble for their positions. They had never been either popular or useful. In many cases they were at deadly feud with their parishioners. The tables were turned, and the day of retribution had arrived. Upon Christmas day of 1688 the "rabbling of the curates," as it was called, was begun. In some cases the curates did not await the action of the peasantry, but beat a precipitate retreat. But in many instances the mob surprised them in their own houses, carried them about in mock procession, tumbled the furniture of the manse out of doors and made a bonfire of it, tore the Geneva cloak which the curates generally wore over their heads, and then taking them to the verge of the parish, bade them be gone and never show their face within it more. The next Sunday a Presbyterian minister would be almost certainly found in the pulpit, denouncing the evils of Prelacy and the Indulgence, and exhorting the people to persevere in the good work they had begun.[3]

[1] Wodrow's "History," iv. 470–472. [2] Ibid. [3] Somer's Tracts, coll. iii, vol. iv. 133.

It has been computed that about 200 of these "rabblings" took place in the west and south during the winter and spring of 1688–89. Many of the Episcopal clergy, with their families, were reduced to great hardships. They were deprived in a day of their livings. There are touching instances in some of the kirk-session records of a few pence having been given to the curate's wife.[1] No one can defend such things. If the curates were to be deprived at all, they should have been deprived in a legal way. It is tolerably evident, however, that these disorderly doings were chiefly carried out by the mob, and by the fierce and implacable Cameronians, who had suffered so much from the Episcopalians. The Presbyterians, as a body, discountenanced them. Even the more moderate of the Cameronians refused to be identified with them.[2] And no one suffered more than a little rough usage. No life was sacrificed. Hardly a drop of blood was spilt. The worst that the outraged clergy could complain of was being thrown lawlessly out of their houses and deprived of their positions, with occasionally a few blows and bruises, and scratches from female fingers. It was bad enough no doubt; but alongside of thirty years of the martyrdom of the Presbyterians, the wrongs of the curates do not affect us very heavily.

The part which William had now to play in relation to the Scottish Church was sufficiently difficult. His own knowledge of affairs, however, and of the principles of toleration, with his honest desire to do what was just and right, stood him in good stead. It was also fortunate for himself and for the country that he had the sagacity to allow himself to be largely guided by one of the most prudent advisers that ever aided a sovereign with his counsel. This was William Carstares, the leading churchman of the period, around whose name the ecclesiastical events of the day naturally cluster. We may pause in the course of our narrative to sketch his career up to this time, in a sentence or two.

He was born in the manse of Cathcart, where his father, John Carstares, was minister for a short time before being translated to the High Church of Glasgow. Mr. John Carstares was

[1] Cunningham's "History," ii. 261.
[2] Rule's "Vindication;" Preface to Sage's "Fundamental Charter."

one of the leading ministers in the Church, and a man of deep and ardent piety. After the establishment of Episcopacy he very soon became involved in the troubles of the period, was ejected from his cure, and suffered imprisonment. His son William, being destined by his parents for the clerical profession, was educated for a time under his father's eye. In the old home in Glasgow he had frequent intercourse as a boy with the accomplished Durham, the genial and witty Zachary Boyd, and others of a like stamp. After taking his degree in Edinburgh —his father having now been ejected from Glasgow—he passed over to Utrecht to complete his education. He was licensed to preach, and apparently also ordained, by the brethren of the "classis" at Utrecht. But it does not appear that he gave himself to any extent to the exercise of the ministry. Through letters from friends in Scotland he was introduced to the notice of the Prince of Orange, who at once discerned in him a person likely to be useful to him in his relations with Britain. Carstares was deeply affected by the disasters which had overtaken his native country, and we can easily conceive that this was greatly intensified by the persecutions to which his near relatives were exposed.

He was very early entrusted with a secret commission by the Prince of Orange, and his papers having been seized, although he himself contrived to escape, he fell under the suspicion of the English Government. Not long afterwards, being supposed to be concerned in the authorship of a pamphlet in which the Earl of Lauderdale was exposed in very odious colours, he was apprehended and imprisoned. Without any formal trial he lay for five weary years in Edinburgh Castle. At his release—which seems to have been in one of those spasmodic fits of clemency which occasionally visited the oppressors of Scotland—he returned to Holland, and remained in close intercourse with William, at Utrecht.

The movement which is known as the Great Whig Plot, which resulted in the ill-fated expedition of the Earl of Argyll, was now on foot among the exiles. Its object was to dethrone James, and to place the sceptre in William's hands. Carstares was—as might be anticipated—fully aware of the details of the scheme, and largely implicated in it. On business connected

with it he came over to England in 1683; and it was during his residence there that the other conspiracy, known as the Rye House Plot, was contrived by men who, although privy to the Great Whig scheme, yet acted entirely on their own responsibility. The object of this celebrated plot was to seize and assassinate the king on his way from Newmarket. Carstares seems to have been aware of some such design, but neither he nor his coadjutors in the Whig plot had any conception of its true character. It was frustrated by the king's return home some days earlier than was expected. One of the conspirators turned king's evidence. Russell, Sydney, and several more who had been implicated in the greater movement, were brought to the block. Carstares was apprehended and taken down to Scotland, in hope of extracting information from him by torture, which could not be legally applied in England. Having refused to depone before the Privy Council as to the members of the Whig conspiracy, while declaring at the same time his ignorance and detestation of the designs of the Rye House plotters, his thumbs were fixed in the thumbscrews; turn after turn was given to the engine, until the sweat poured over his face, and he cried out in agony that the bones were crushed. The boot was brought and his leg inserted in it, while his thumbs were still held fast in the thumbscrews; but the executioner being unable to fix the wedges, he applied himself again to the thumbscrew, and turned it down until Carstares was ready to swoon. He was then released and sent back to prison. The next day, being brought to the Council Chamber for further torture, he was induced to make a declaration, the substance of which he believed was fully known to the Privy Council already, and upon the express understanding that it was not to be used against any who might be arraigned at their bar. It was always understood that he retained all the information which was of greatest importance, and which would have been invaluable to the Government had they been made acquainted with it.

It is not surprising that when he returned to Holland, which he did as soon as he was set at liberty, he was regarded with increased esteem by William. He officiated as minister of the Scots congregation at Leyden until the invasion of England.

When that event took place he came over in the same vessel with the prince. It was at his desire that the impressive service was celebrated by the troops on the beach at Torbay, which so strongly commended the piety of the Prince of Orange to the people of England. As soon as William was established on the throne he appointed Carstares as his private chaplain, assigned him apartments in his palace at Kensington, and intimated that he desired him to be constantly about his person. His presence there, and his intimate knowledge of Scottish ecclesiastical affairs, greatly contributed to their satisfactory adjustment.[1]

When it became apparent that a change in the monarchy was an accomplished fact, the Scottish clergy, alarmed for the safety of the Church, despatched the Bishop of Edinburgh—Dr. Rose—to London, to plead their cause. Rose soon found that he had no easy task to perform. The Archbishop of Canterbury, with whom he took counsel, assured him that William's favour for Scottish Episcopacy would depend on the manner in which the Scottish clergy supported his claims. It was no part of Rose's commission to profess allegiance to William on behalf of the Church, for he knew that the clergy of Scotland were almost to a man supporters of the Stuart dynasty. The Bishop of St. Asaph's received him gruffly, and when Rose afterwards complained of this to the archbishop, he replied: "St. Asaph's is a good man, but an angry man."

At length it was intimated to the bishop that an interview would be granted to him. He appeared in the presence-chamber accordingly, and having been duly presented, the new king asked him if "he was going to Scotland?" The bishop answered that he was, and requested to know if the king had any commands for him. The king replied that "he hoped the Scottish clergy would consider his claims as favourably as the English." The bishop answered "that he and his brethren would serve him as far as conscience and duty would permit." The king made no reply, but turned on his heel and walked back amongst his courtiers. The fate of Scottish Episcopacy was sealed from that day.[2]

[1] M'Cormick; Story's "Carstares."
[2] Keith's "Catalogue of the Scottish Bishops," Appendix; Letter of Dr. Rose.

But it is evident that a sagacious prince like William must have been fully alive to the difficulties of the case. The Episcopalians in Scotland were now both a numerous and an influential body. The violent puritanic spirit of the protesting party must have been repugnant to a man who thoroughly understood the principles of toleration. He must have seen, moreover, that a uniform system of Church government over the two kingdoms would have been an unspeakable power to weld them together. A moderate Episcopacy, such as Leighton had sketched in his "Accommodation," which would have harmonized with the more imposing hierarchy of England, probably appeared to him the most effective settlement of the religious question in Scotland.

On the other hand, even to broach such an idea would have alienated the Presbyterians, who were loyal to him. Perhaps it might even have tended to perpetuate the unhappy state of matters which had so long existed in Scotland; for unquestionably so mild a recognition of their claims would not have reconciled the Episcopalian party to his government. They owed their position to the infatuation of the fallen dynasty, and it is not surprising that they remained faithful to it.

But William soon saw that any arbitrary settlement of the Church question in Scotland would not be satisfactory. It would be too great a responsibility for a monarch to assume, especially in the uncertain position in which he still found himself. The Convention of the Estates was to meet shortly, and as they formed the best available representation of the feelings of the Scottish nation, William resolved to leave the matter in their hands.

But there were difficulties even here. According to the existing Acts, no one could sit in this Convention, until he had taken oaths abjuring the Covenants and acknowledging the king's supremacy in ecclesiastical affairs. If these were to remain in force, the Convention would simply be a meeting of Episcopalians and sworn adherents of the exiled house. It was easy to see what sort of reception they would have offered to William, and what form of Church government they would have decided upon for Scotland. There was only one way of solving the difficulty. William, of his own authority, dispensed with these oaths; and required the members for the burghs to be chosen by

a poll of the inhabitants. Of course the friends of the late dynasty said that he was doing exactly what had cost the Stuarts their throne—he was making laws upon his own authority. But there was really no other way out of the difficulty; and it was fortunate that William had the courage in such an extremity to do what was necessary, without being too scrupulous about a mere point of form.

The Estates accordingly met at Edinburgh on the 14th March, 1689. The whole country looked to their meeting with the greatest anxiety. It was to settle both who was to have the crown of Scotland, and what was to be the religion of Scotland. It was soon seen that the Presbyterian party and the friends of William had a large majority. The election of the president was a sufficient test. The Duke of Hamilton was carried against the Duke of Atholl by a majority of forty. A good many of the adherents of James then went away. A letter was read from the Prince of Orange asking the Convention, in general terms, to settle the question of religion upon lasting foundations. It did not speak either of Presbytery or Episcopacy. The Estates agreed to send a respectful reply to it.[1] A letter was also read from the late king offering a pardon to all who should return to their allegiance before the end of the month, and declaring all who should not do so to be traitors. No reply was sent to that letter.

The Convention then proceeded to its practical work. It declared that James VII. was a Papist; that he had violated the laws, and had never taken the coronation oath. On these grounds it declared that he had forfeited his kingdom, and that the throne was vacant. Then it proceeded to resolve that William and Mary, king and queen of England, France, and Ireland, should be declared king and queen of Scotland. Only nine members of the Convention opposed this resolution, and seven of these were bishops.

When the Convention had been at first constituted the bishop who conducted its devotions boldly prayed for the return of King James. When the sederunt at which William and Mary were elected king and queen was about to be concluded, one of the barons whispered to the bishop that if he prayed now

[1] Acts of the Scottish Parliaments.

for King James it would be treason. The bishop saw his position, and very wisely closed the meeting by simply reciting the Lord's Prayer.[1]

The resolution as to the filling up of the throne was embodied in the famous document known as the "Claim of Right." But the Claim contained more than a statement of this resolution. It also stated their determination as to the Church. It declared, among other things, that "Prelacy and the superiority of any office in the Church above presbyters is, and hath been, a great and insupportable grievance and trouble to this nation, and contrary to the inclination of the generality of the people ever since the Reformation (they having been reformed from Popery by presbyters), and therefore ought to be abolished." This is not high ground. It does not say either that Presbytery is of Divine origin, or that Episcopacy is opposed to it. It is to a great extent a claim from expediency. There were of course fierce disputes upon the subject outside the Convention. The Episcopalians declared that Parliament had formerly ratified the prelatical system, and that it had become, and was at the moment, the religion of the great body of the people —the clergy, the universities, and the members of the College of Justice being all attached to it. The Presbyterians, on the other hand, retorted that if the Parliament had at any time ratified Episcopacy it was under a species of coercion, and that whenever they were free agents they undid what they had done. They declared also that if the majority of the people in certain districts had attached themselves to Episcopacy, it was because they had been forced to do so by the rigour of long and relentless persecution; and they were only too glad to have an opportunity of returning to the simplicity of the Presbyterian faith.[2]

The resolution of the Convention was exactly what William desired. He had seen that it would have been highly impolitic to have himself decided what the Church polity of Scotland was to be, but he had no difficulty in ratifying what had been done by the Convention. The responsibility of having fixed the mode of church government now lay with them. Three of the most prominent and influential members of the

[1] Somers' Tracts. [2] Sage's "Fundamental Charter;" Rule's "Vindication."

Convention—the Earl of Argyll, Sir James Montgomery, and Sir John Dalrymple—were deputed to proceed to London to make a formal offer of the crown to William and Mary. The ceremony was a very imposing one. It took place on the 11th of May, 1689, at Whitehall. The Duke of Argyll read the coronation oath clause by clause, and as he did so the king and queen lifted up their hands and repeated the words after him. The last clause in the oath made the king swear that "he should root out all heretics and enemies to the true worship of God." William paused at this, and said, "I will not lay myself under any obligation to be a persecutor." The Commissioners declared that they did not understand this to be implied in the clause of the oath; whereupon William took it. He had at any rate satisfied his own conscience, whatever the strict meaning of the clause might be.

The Convention had not met without a considerable amount of risk. The Castle was held by the Duke of Gordon, a stanch papist, who refused to surrender when summoned to do so. Dundee was also in Edinburgh, and his troopers were said to be lurking in the city. It may well be supposed that he did not regard the proceedings of the Convention with much favour. The extreme Covenanting party had resolved to raise a body of men for the protection of the meeting when it should assemble. A regiment was levied, chiefly in the neighbourhood of Douglas, in Lanarkshire. At first they proposed that they should be governed in a manner which was totally inconsistent with military discipline—that they should have ministers and elders of their own—that they should set apart certain days of the week as fast days—that they should choose their own officers and depose them at pleasure, in order to ensure that they should be always faithful to the Covenants.[1] It was with the greatest difficulty that Colonel Cleland, their first commander, induced them to forego these stipulations; but he contrived at last to get them to enlist upon more reasonable terms. Their assistance was speedily required. The proceedings of the Convention received a sudden check, by an alarm which at first seemed only too well founded. Dundee had complained to the Convention that his life was not safe in the streets, and had claimed protection, which was re-

[1] "Faithful Contendings Displayed," 393–404.

fused him. Upon this he abruptly left the city, after a conference with Gordon at the foot of the ramparts, and followed by his troopers, made for the Highlands. The news soon came that he had raised the standard of King James. This was soon followed by the tidings of his brief but brilliant campaign; his meteor-like descent upon William's troops at the wild Pass of Killiecrankie; his overwhelming onslaught, and his death in the moment of victory. His devoted attachment to his master's cause, and his loyal determination to stand true when so many were deserting it, have gone far to redeem his character from the darker shades which rest upon it. The responsibility for his stern and relentless measures really lies not with him, for he was but the instrument who carried out what others had devised. It is the insensate and heartless monarch and government of the day that must bear the stigma of the atrocities which they authorized. The Cameronians, however (as they were henceforth called), gave a final check to Dundee's victorious army. Their defence of the House of Dunkeld was one of the most brilliant exploits of the day. They shut themselves into the demesne, and finally into the house itself, and although their assailants outnumbered them five or six times over, they resolved that they would burn the building over their own heads and die among the ruins rather than yield. They lost their brave young commander, Colonel Cleland, in one of their sallies; but after the conflict had continued for days the Highlanders at last refused to continue it, and declaring that they could not fight with devils, drew off to their fastnesses and abandoned the campaign.

Relieved in this way from the danger which threatened them, the Convention of Estates were now in a position to proceed with the consideration of the questions regarding the Church. By their own declaration, and somewhat irregularly, it must be admitted, they were converted into a Parliament, and the Earl of Crawford, a stanch Presbyterian, was appointed president. But there were great difficulties in the way of finally settling the form of Church government. The Parliament was broken up into rival factions. Some were anxious to revert to Episcopacy, notwithstanding the declaration which had been made against it. The Presbyterians were divided into the Moderate

section and the representatives of the high Covenanting party. There was a strong party also ready to join the Jacobites and bring back King James, provided he would consent to establish Presbytery. It was, moreover, roundly asserted that it was gross Erastianism for the State to interfere at all in the settlement of the Church affairs, and that the ministers of religion alone had a right to determine what the government of the Church of the future should be. Fortunately Earl Crawford, the president, was not only moderate in his views, but he was a strong supporter of a reasonable and speedy settlement of the religious question on a Presbyterian basis. He had much to contend with, and he declared it to be "crushing" employment.[1] But along with a few resolute and like-minded spirits he persevered, and at length carried his point. The Parliament formally abolished Episcopacy as ratified by law, and annulled the Act of Supremacy by which Charles had constituted himself dictator in all matters ecclesiastical.

But although Episcopacy was thus overthrown, Presbytery was not set up, and the difficulties and disputes multiplied so greatly that it was impossible to proceed further. The Parliament broke up. Eight months passed away. The community at large was utterly perplexed. Kirk sessions, presbyteries, and synods were holding meetings: bishops were still using their titles, and exercising many of their functions. It was plain that this state of matters could not be allowed to continue. William was anxious that the new establishment should be thoroughly liberal and comprehensive. He wished all the Episcopal ministers to be retained who would agree to accept the new order. He earnestly desired to retain patronage, but he saw that he must yield this, if a settlement was to be obtained.

On the 25th of April, 1690, the Parliament met which gave us the Church as we now enjoy it; and no measures were ever more significant than those which were passed. First of all, it confirmed the Act of the previous year abolishing the Act of Supremacy of 1669, by which the king had been declared to have supreme authority in all religious affairs. It next proceeded to restore the Presbyterian ministers who had been put

[1] Leven and Melville Papers.

out of their livings for declining to accept Episcopacy. Then came the famous Act which renewed the establishment of the Church of Scotland. It ratifies the Confession of Faith. It annuls all the statutes in favour of Popery and Prelacy. It declares that the government of the Church shall be by kirk sessions, presbyteries, synods, and general assemblies, conform to the original Act of 1592, which it confirms. It vests the said government in the ministers outed for nonconformity to Prelacy, and those whom they may admit. It appoints the General Assembly to meet at Edinburgh on the third Thursday of October, 1690. It declares all parishes vacant which the ministers have deserted, or where they have been deprived for not making public prayers for King William and Queen Mary. And it allows the meeting of the General Assembly or any "visitors" appointed by them to proceed against all "insufficient, negligent, scandalous, and erroneous ministers, . . . to the effect the disorders that have happened in this Church may be redressed."[1]

When the Westminster Confession was ratified, it was read over chapter by chapter to the members of the House. They listened with undisguised weariness, but when the reading was finished they ratified the document. It was then proposed that the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Directory of Public Worship, should also be read over. But the House had had enough of theology. They declared there was no need to read further, and they never returned to the subject.[2] The Westminster Confession is therefore the only standard legally authorized. The Covenants were passed over. The Catechisms and the Directory have only the sanction of their respectable origin, and their intrinsic worth.

William had great scruples as to abolishing patronage. He seems to have held that its abolition was, in some sort, a confiscation of the property of the patrons. Perhaps he may have believed also that it was the safest mode of appointment to vacant benefices. But he saw that patronage, as it had been hitherto exercised, could not be retained, because all sections of the Presbyterian party were resolved to press its abolition. He had directed his commissioner, therefore, to concede the point, if

[1] Acts of Scots Parliament.

[2] Cunningham's "Hist." ii. 286.

it were necessary; and a threatened descent upon the Scottish coasts by the French fleet, with the discovery of a conspiracy in favour of the exiled monarch, made it evident that the Presbyterians must be propitiated at all hazards. An Act was accordingly passed by which, in all vacancies, the heritors and elders were to nominate a person to the congregation for their approval. If the congregation disapproved of him, they were to state their reasons to the Presbytery, by whom the matter was to be finally settled. The patrons were to receive from the parish a sum of 600 merks, and a right to all teinds to which no other could show a title, in consideration of their being deprived of the right of presentation.[1]

All this was certainly a great triumph to the people, who had so long been held down and trampled upon. The principles they had contended for so manfully were solemnly acknowledged to be just. Their long years of patient endurance were crowned with a great reward. Very few of the old ministers survived. But here and there they came out of their hiding-places, and entered the manses where their youthful ministry had been spent, and the pulpits which had so long been closed against them. "The Lord had done great things" for them and for their people, "whereof they were glad."

The General Assembly had been appointed to meet on the third Thursday of October. The greatest anxiety was felt as to what should be transacted at this meeting. The government of the Church had been committed to the Presbyterian ministers, but it was of course to be desired that they should exercise their powers with the utmost moderation. All the more influential laity eagerly pressed upon the ministers the necessity of forbearance and magnanimity. They were advised to do little more than meet and take possession, so to speak. Later procedure could be guided by the course of events.

The 16th of October came. The Assembly met in the High Kirk. Mr. Gabriel Cunningham was elected moderator, and preached in the forenoon, and Mr. Patrick Simson in the afternoon.[2] Then the commissioner, Lord Carmichael, produced his

[1] Leven and Melville Papers.

[2] "Abridgment of Proceedings of Assembly." These ministers had been the chairmen of the last two meetings of the clergy, preliminary to this Assembly.

commission, and was addressed by Mr. Cunningham from the chair. The king's letter was read counselling moderation. "A calm and peaceable procedure," it said, "will be no less pleasing to us than it becometh you. . . . Moderation is what religion enjoins, neighbouring churches expect from you, and we recommend to you." Carstares had been earnest in the same direction. It is not unlikely that his influence contributed to increase the king's own wish for forbearance. He was not a member of the Assembly, but he was present during its sittings, and was always ready with his sagacious counsel. Episcopacy was still dominant in the northern counties. Carstares pressed upon the Assembly that all efforts should be made to induce the Episcopalian clergy to conform, and that they should not be deprived unless in the last resort. This was accordingly the policy with regard to the Episcopal party which the Assembly adopted. It seems to have been tacitly agreed that any Episcopalian ministers who still retained their livings should be allowed to continue to do so upon condition that they should acknowledge Presbyterian Church government, and take the oaths to William. There was no great reason why they should not do this. All through the time that the Episcopalians held the supremacy the form of worship was the same as that of the Presbyterians. No liturgy had been used since the day of Jenny Geddes' vigorous protest against it. The Presbyteries had met as usual, as did also the synods, with the bishop as perpetual moderator.[1] No great change, therefore, was to take place externally. Moreover, the extreme views as to the divine right of Presbytery found no place in the reconstituted Church. The Cameronians, indeed, protested against the grievous defection of the Church in receiving any favour at the hands of the legislature short of a declaration that Presbytery was the only scriptural form of Church government, and its imposition upon the whole kingdom in terms of the Covenants. But the only three ministers whom they had after the death of Renwick appeared at the bar of the Assembly craving to be admitted as ministers of the Church, and they were admitted accordingly.

The Assembly transacted a good deal of practical business:

[1] Wilson's "Register of the Diocesan Synod of Dunblane."

appointing a national fast, arranging for the union of certain presbyteries for a time till their numbers should be completed, for the regular dispensation of the sacraments, and for a supply of Gaelic Bibles and Testaments for the Highlands. In accordance with the powers conferred upon them by the Act of Parliament, the Assembly appointed two commissions to purge out "inefficient and scandalous ministers"—one for the country south of the Tay, the other for the district to the north of it. The commissions were also to see that all who were retained in the Church and admitted to its government signed the Confession of Faith and submitted to the Presbyterian discipline.[1] The Assembly sat for nearly a month, and the king's representative was able to inform his Majesty that its proceedings had been characterized by moderation.[2]

The Assembly had been prudent, but the commissions appointed by them were not equally so. On the contrary, they exercised their power with some rigour. The best friends of the Church urged leniency towards the Episcopalians, but the advice was not very cordially adopted. In many cases the Episcopal incumbents were summarily ejected, and they and their families reduced to poverty. Probably the statements of the Episcopal pamphlets of the day are exaggerated, for they make very sweeping charges against the injustice of the commissions. But, after making every allowance for this, it seems evident that the unfortunate Episcopalian clergy had now to submit to a mild share of the harshness they had not been slow to mete out to their Presbyterian brethren. So many of the Episcopal incumbents were deposed that it was impossible to fill their places, and the churches were frequently shut up. For nearly twenty years after this time the great work of the Assembly was the supply of the vacant parishes with temporary ministrations.

The universities were included in the work of the Commissions. The principals and professors of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St. Andrews for the most part remained true to their Episcopalianism, and they were accordingly ejected from their chairs, and Presbyterians appointed in their place. Aberdeen was the only exception. It was a stronghold of Episcopacy. But ap-

[1] Acts of Assembly, 232; "Abridgment." [2] Leven and Melville Papers.

parently it would have been impossible for the commission to have exerted its powers there. The people would have risen against them. So they wisely refrained from visiting the northern university, and allowed the Episcopal professors there to retain their offices.

The Episcopalians appealed to the king, who was with the army in Flanders. Their deputation were graciously received, and the king wrote letters begging that the work of expulsion should cease, and that the Episcopalians who chose to conform should be admitted. But the letters had little or no effect. They were looked upon as an interference with the spiritual independence of the Church, and resented accordingly.

The next Assembly met in January, 1692. The king had adjourned it to this date after having fixed an earlier one, much to the displeasure of the ministers. The commissioner had instructions to press the admission of the Episcopalians upon the Assembly. But neither his representations nor the king's own letter had much influence. The Presbyterian ministers suspected, from various political indications, that means were being used by the Episcopalian party for the restoration of the Stuarts, and they shrank from giving such countenance to the movement as an amalgamation with the Episcopalians would imply. The Episcopalians, on the other hand, did not conceal that they, on their part, anticipated a speedy triumph. Their friends in England warmly sympathized with them in their hardships, and this gave them new courage. At length the commissioner's patience became exhausted, and one of those contentions took place between him and the Assembly, which were not unfrequent in the earlier times of the history of the Church. He told them that, as they had done nothing towards the end the king had in view, he must dissolve the Assembly. The moderator asked what day was named for another meeting. The commissioner replied that the king would fix a day in due time. But this did not satisfy the Assembly. They held that they had the right to meet when they chose; and accordingly the moderator, in answer to the call of the members, appointed the third Wednesday of August, 1693, as the day for the next meeting. He then pronounced the blessing.[1] Thus strained

[1] Principal Lee's "Lectures on the History of the Church of Scotland."

were the relations between the king and the Church at this time.

The year which followed was one of much perplexity to the Church and the country. It was rendered notorious by the horrible massacre of Glencoe, the particulars of which are too well known to call for detail. Rightly or wrongly William was supposed to be more or less implicated in the atrocity. His rule became correspondingly unpopular, especially in Scotland, and the Jacobite party saw with undisguised delight that there was an opportunity for the furtherance of their own schemes. They kept the country in perpetual excitement by their plots. In order to give additional security to the reigning dynasty, a measure was devised by the Scots Parliament of 1693, which very nearly resulted in a serious collision between the Church and the Government. This was the Oath of Assurance, in which the person who took it was made to swear that William was king not only *de facto* but *de jure*. The Parliament required this oath to be taken by every one who held any public office, and amongst others by the clergy.

It was not at first supposed that the Presbyterian ministers would have any serious objections to this oath. But when it had become law, and people began to discuss it, conscientious scruples asserted themselves. The Episcopalians were indisposed to take it, as a matter of course, because they held that James, and not William, was the rightful king. The Presbyterians, on the other hand, while admitting that William was legitimately enough in possession of the throne, were not prepared to declare that he held the crown by a title that was unquestionable, especially when they were required to confirm the assertion by the solemnity of an oath. They argued that the deposition of kings and magistrates, and the substitution of others in their place, was always a point on which delicate and difficult questions might arise. The Church had never been asked to decide as to which party was in the right in any of the contendings for the crown in past days. Why should she be required to do so now, and to do so upon oath?[1]

The Parliament of 1693 also passed an Act called an "Act

[1] "Letter of the English Presbyterians to their Brethren in Scotland;" M'Cormick's "Carstares."

for settling the quiet and peace of the Church," in which the king and queen were asked to call a meeting of the General Assembly to order the affairs of the Church, and particularly to admit such of the Episcopalian ministers as were willing to take the Oaths of Allegiance and Assurance, and to subscribe the Confession of Faith, to a share in the government of the Church. The Assembly was accordingly summoned to meet on the 29th of March, 1694. Apparently the ministers had shrunk from actually taking the strong step of meeting on the day they themselves had fixed. They preferred to wait until the king himself chose to call them. In the meantime they had petitioned the Privy Council to be relieved from subscribing the Oath of Assurance. But instead of granting their request, the Privy Council had advised the king to insist that every member of Assembly should take the oath before he should be allowed to take his seat. Instructions to this effect were accordingly issued to Lord Carmichael, who was to act as the king's commissioner for that year. If the ministers refused to take the oath he was to dissolve the Assembly. But when the commissioner arrived in Edinburgh, a short time before the Assembly was to meet, he found many of the ministers already in the town. They had resolved to resist taking the oath, at all hazards. It was an Erastian interference, they said, on the part of the Government, to impose any such oath upon a spiritual court. The commissioner felt the delicacy of the position. There was still time to get further instructions from London before the day when the Assembly must be constituted, and the commissioner despatched letters stating the case, and asking what was to be done. The ministers also sent despatches to Carstares, begging for his interference with the king on their behalf. The king's advisers, Lord Stair and Lord Tarbet, represented that the refusal of the ministers to take the oath was tantamount to rebellion; and acting under their influence, the king drew up a letter of instructions to Carmichael, making the Oath of Assurance imperative. It was delivered to the special messenger, who was directed to go down to Edinburgh with it as speedily as possible.

Carstares had been absent from Kensington when the despatches from Scotland had arrived. He returned to the palace

just as the king's courier was about to leave for Scotland. Hastily glancing over his own letters he saw at once how the case stood, and in the king's name he demanded from the messenger the despatch which he was about to carry to Scotland. He then proceeded instantly to the king's apartments. He was told that the king had gone to bed, but he represented that his business was of the greatest importance and that he must be admitted. When he entered the royal bedchamber he found his Majesty asleep. He drew aside the curtains, went down on his knees, and awakened the king. William was much astonished to find Carstares in such a position and at such an hour. He asked for an explanation. "I am come," said Carstares, "to beg for my life." He then went on to explain how he had intercepted the messenger and had taken his despatches from him. At first the king was much displeased, for he could not lightly forgive any intrusion upon his prerogative. He asked Carstares how he had dared to contravene his commands. Carstares requested to be allowed to explain. He told the king that the Episcopalians were already alienated from him, and that if he persisted in imposing this oath upon the Presbyterians he would make them his enemies also. He pointed out that oaths were of no use to a monarch unless he had the affection of his people also. If he should make the concession which the Presbyterian ministers asked, and relieve them from the necessity of violating their conscientious scruples, they would be from that day the most loyal and devoted of his subjects.

William had too much good sense not to see the force of Carstares' representations. He told him to throw the letters into the fire, and to write such instructions as he thought proper. This was soon done, and the messenger was despatched with them in all haste. He arrived in Edinburgh on the very morning on which the Assembly was to meet. Both the commissioner and the ministers were in much trepidation. The ministers were determined not to take the oath, and they were equally determined to meet in virtue of their own inherent powers, if the Assembly should be dissolved. It had been with much anxiety that all parties had awaited the eventful day of the Assembly's meeting. It came, and with it, in

the early morning, came the king's messenger. Every one was relieved when the packet was opened, and it was found that his Majesty had dispensed with the oath. The members of Assembly met with easy minds, and a load was removed from the commissioner's mind also.[1] There has never since that time been any dispute as to the summoning of the General Assembly. That court appoints the day when the next meeting shall be held, of its own authority. The commissioner afterwards appoints it to meet on the same day, by the authority of the sovereign. No right is invaded, and no prerogative is questioned, and everything proceeds in harmony and peace.

When the Assembly proceeded to business they amply fulfilled Carstares' prediction. They resolved to receive the Episcopalian ministers who should qualify according to the Act of Parliament. Many of them were admitted accordingly, and the wishes of the king were gratified. They then passed on to other matters which they now felt themselves free to consider. They arranged what number of members the presbyteries should send to the Assembly. They appointed ministers to go to the north to supply the parishes from which the Episcopal ministers had been ejected. They made special enactments as to forms of procedure, some of which still subsist. The ministers were relieved from their apprehensions. Their causes of anxiety were removed, and they turned gladly to the work of reconstructing the Church upon permanent and solid foundations.

[1] M'Cormick's "Carstares;" Story's "Carstares;" Cunningham's "History."

CHAPTER XX.

FROM THE ASSEMBLY OF 1694 TO THE UNION OF 1707.

State of the Church after the Revolution Settlement—Toleration of Episcopal clergy—Remains of Popery—Thomas Aikenhead—Parish Schools—The Barrier Act—Proposal to remove St. Andrews University to Perth—The Darien Scheme—Bourignianism—Death and character of William—Accession of Queen Anne—Episcopal clergy petition for redress of grievances—The Union.

THE Church of Scotland was now composed of ministers of at least two distinct types. There were, first, the Presbyterians by conviction, a small section of whom had been true to their principles through the trying times of the persecution, and who survived now, as old men, to witness the establishment of the principles they had contended for so zealously. To them were added those who had conformed from Episcopacy, and had been duly admitted to the Presbyterian establishment. A few young men were being gradually added to the ministry of the Church, but these were very few and by no means sufficiently numerous to supply the vacancies. But over a great part of the north, and to some extent in the West Highlands, the Episcopal ministers still retained their benefices and exercised their functions. They refused to conform. In their secret hearts they were hostile to the reigning dynasty, and opposed to the Presbyterian form of church government. But it was found impossible to eject them from their parishes. They had too strong a hold on the affections of their people; probably, also, both the ecclesiastical and the secular power was too weak in the outlying localities where they still held possession to permit of strong measures against them. In fact, when a committee of the Assembly proceeded to Aberdeen in 1694 to endeavour to rectify this anomalous state of matters, they were met by a synod of Episcopalian divines, who demanded that all matters in dispute should be referred to a General Assembly of the whole Scottish clergy. Of course this would have been to open up the whole church question anew, and the committee naturally declined to entertain the proposal, especially as the Episcopal party, from their strength in the north,

would probably have had a local advantage. The committee did not succeed in effecting any improvement.[1] But a practical improvement was effected by the Parliament of 1695, in an Act by which, on partial conformance, the Episcopal ministers might legally retain their livings and exercise their functions. If they took the oaths to Government and conducted themselves in a becoming manner, their not having conformed to the Presbyterian system was to be overlooked; they were to be regarded, however, merely as solitary missionaries. They were not recognized as members of any corporate ecclesiastical body. So that while the provision was doubtless a great relief to many of the Episcopal clergy who still clung to their own faith and forms, it went far to break up the prelatic party as a corporate opposition to the Presbyterian establishment. As a healing measure it disarmed Episcopacy of a practical argument in its favour which the existence of a grievance always presents.

In the remoter parts of the north, and in many of the western islands, Popery still lingered, as indeed to some extent it does to this day. In point of fact the Reformation never spread into these far-off regions. When the excitement of the new order of things spread through the country, a few earnest apostles of Protestantism, braving what were then the dangers and the hardships of a pilgrimage into these savage wilds, would have rooted out every remnant of superstition as effectually as did Knox and his coadjutors in and around the centres of Scottish life. But somehow these distant parts were overlooked. The tide of enthusiastic fervour subsided, and the report that so great a portion of the nation had abandoned the ancient faith only made its votaries in the distant glens cling to it with a fonder tenacity.

The close of the seventeenth century was marked by the last act of persecution with which Scotland was to be disgraced. This time it was the Presbyterian party that showed the intolerant spirit. A lad named Thomas Aikenhead, a student of eighteen years of age, had contracted certain infidel opinions in the course of his studies. Like many others since his day, he was disposed to air his views, and unfortunately he confided his diffi-

[1] Hill Burton's "History of Scotland," ii.

culties rather freely to some of his companions. They certainly did not exhibit any power of profound speculation, or indeed any sceptical tendency that was likely to do much harm, or that was not almost certain to disappear with further study and more mature understanding. Trinity in unity was a contradiction—Moses had learned the science of magic in Egypt, and it was by this that he wrought his miracles. The *anthropos* was as great an absurdity as *Hircocervus*, or a quadrature to a rotundum.[1] The authorities heard of the manner in which the youth was speaking of sacred things. They resolved to make an example of him. He was indicted under an old statute which made it punishable with death to curse the Supreme Being. The crime was brought home to him, and he was sentenced to be hanged. The poor young man begged for life, and recanted all his sceptical views. But it was in vain. The clergy of Edinburgh—to their shame be it spoken—did nothing to stem the tide of intolerance. Lord Macaulay gives an account of this transaction[2] which is evidently too highly coloured; and it appears that efforts were made by at least two of the ministers to obtain a pardon or a reprieve for Aikenhead.[3] But there seems no doubt that the clerical influence used in his favour was of slight weight. He was hanged between Edinburgh and Leith, and died, it is said, with the Bible in his hands.

The Parliament of 1696 passed the Act which settled the famous Scottish parish school system. John Knox had frequently contended at the time of the Reformation that a portion of the immense ecclesiastical revenues of the overthrown Romish Church should be applied for educational purposes, and the First Book of Discipline claimed that a school should be maintained in every parish. It is well known how greatly the Reformer was chagrined at seeing his cherished scheme for the instruction of the people set aside to gratify the avarice of the nobles. Efforts were made from time to time to partially carry out the projected system. But the Acts on which these efforts were founded were never imperative, and the system was only partially operative. During the troubled period that preceded

[1] Hill Burton's "History of Scotland;" Cunningham, &c. [2] "Hist." vol. iv.
[3] Preface to Lorimer's "Discourses," London, 1713.

the Revolution it is not surprising that the subject of the education of the people was not much thought of by the legislators, or greatly desired by the masses. But now that a time had been reached of comparative quiet, the leading men of the day turned their attention to this great question, and the Scottish Parliament of 1696 gave the country the celebrated system of which Scotland was for so many years so justly proud. It continued in force until growing requirements and changed circumstances called for the reconstruction of the educational polity, and the new and splendid, although much more costly, machinery was created by the Education Act of 1872. By the Act of 1696 the heritors of every parish had to provide a school, with a dwelling-house and a salary for the schoolmaster.[1] The Assembly also passed an Act enjoining presbyteries to take care that the provisions of the Act of Parliament were carried out; and thus, although the educational profession was by no means lucrative, a class of teachers was introduced into the parishes of Scotland who were often men of scholarship, almost always of independent and high moral tone, and whose influence in moulding the character of successive generations of Scotsmen, and fitting them for important and distinguished positions in life, it is impossible to overrate.

Those who study the legislation of the Church will be interested to notice the passing of the famous Barrier Act, in the year succeeding the establishment of the parish schools. It remains on the statute book of the Church to the present day, and it effectually prevents rash or hasty legislation upon vital points. It provides that any proposal which is to affect the whole Church must be presented to the General Assembly, in the form of an overture. The Assembly may then, if it sees fit, transmit this overture to the presbyteries of the Church for their consideration. The presbyteries debate the matter during the course of the year, and it is only when a majority of them report their approval of the measure, that the Assembly of the following year can pass it into a permanent law. The Act is founded upon the assumption that no alteration or innovation be permitted on the doctrine, worship, discipline, or government of the Church, without the general consent of her

[1] William III., Parl. 1.

office-bearers. It is held by many that it is only proposals affecting these four specific matters which require, in terms of the Act, to be sent down to the inferior courts for their approval. Doctrine, worship, discipline, and government certainly include a great deal, and it is not easy to see what measure might not be fairly comprehended under one or other of these heads. But the wording of the Act seems, if possible, even more comprehensive. It expressly provides that "before any General Assembly of this Church shall pass *any Acts which are to be binding rules and constitutions* to the Church, the same Acts shall be . . . remitted to the consideration of the several presbyteries," &c., and it is difficult to understand how any proposal whatever can be in conformity with the terms of this statute, which has not been subjected to the wise and salutary procedure for which it makes provision.[1]

It was in this year that a proposal was canvassed for removing the University of St. Andrews to the town of Perth, which, if it had been carried out, might have had at least an indirect influence upon the fortunes of the Church. The situation of St. Andrews was remote. It was difficult of access. Provisions were dear. Moreover, the population of the old Fifeshire city was rude and ungovernable. Both the professors and the students were often in bodily terror from their fierce ways. The good people of Perth welcomed the proposed transference of the ancient university to their town with much cordiality. They agreed to furnish the necessary accommodation for two of the colleges, and ground for the buildings of the third. The university, however, while grateful for the generosity of their neighbours in Perth, naturally declined to close with such an offer, until they saw some prospect of obtaining all the accommodation required. Whilst they were waiting some favourable turn of affairs, a political crisis took place by which an influential Scots nobleman, the Earl of Tullibardine, was removed from power. Apparently the university had been trusting to his good offices to enable them to carry their point, for on his resigning the seals the negotiations came to an end; and they were never renewed. It may have been a matter of disappointment, at the time, to the

[1] Acts of Assembly, 1697: the Barrier Act.

parties who were seeking what they considered a desirable change of locality for the university seat; but we cannot regret that the project was unsuccessful, and that the associations which cluster round St. Andrews as a cathedral city and a place of learning for so many centuries remain still unbroken.[1]

Up to this time in the history of Scotland the country had had but slight opportunity for engaging in general commerce. The centuries during which she was hardly able to maintain her own position against the constant encroachments of England, were succeeded by the terrible years of religious excitement and warfare, which left her neither time nor means for mercantile speculation on any extensive scale. But as the hardships of these times passed away and were gradually forgotten, people began to direct their thoughts towards national aggrandisement. Their first venture, however, was sufficiently disastrous. It was projected by a man named William Paterson, a Scotsman by birth, but who had travelled far and seen much of the world —it is sometimes alleged—in questionable ways. He is said to have given the financial sketch which resulted in the formation of the Bank of England; but not having received the reward he anticipated, he confided to the Scottish Government another and still more magnificent enterprise. His scheme was to occupy a portion of the Isthmus of Darien, which had as yet been unappropriated by the Spaniards; to establish Scottish settlements both on the eastern and western shores of that narrow neck of land, and to command the means of transport across it. It would soon be the recognized highway for the traffic of the world from west to east and from east to west. The Scottish colonists would speedily reap a magnificent harvest from their courage and enterprise.

The scheme was by no means regarded with favour by the capitalists of London, who were jealous of the opening towards affluence which the Scots seemed to have made for themselves. But the Scottish Parliament passed an Act conferring very extensive powers upon the company. The country was completely carried away with the enthusiastic descriptions of the wealth that was sure to accrue from its transactions. Money flowed in. Every one who had a little to spare invested it in

[1] Cunningham's "Hist.;" Carstares' State Papers.

the enterprise. Many people impoverished themselves in the hope of ultimately realizing an immense fortune. Ships were purchased. Large and costly cargoes were embarked in them. Twelve hundred emigrants, some of them of good family, eagerly set sail to form the colony. The General Assembly sent four ministers to found a church in the settlement. The voyage was prosperous. They landed without accident, and at first all seemed to promise well. But before long they began to feel the dire effects of a noxious climate. Disease broke out amongst them and rapidly thinned their ranks. A second expedition, following on the first, before tidings of the misfortunes had time to reach Scotland, found on its arrival, instead of the hospitable reception from a flourishing community which had been anticipated, the settlement strewn with a multitude of graves, the forts half built and ruinous, the settlers, or such of them as survived, weakened, disheartened, and split up into rival factions. In this condition they were attacked by the Spaniards, and defeated with great slaughter. A miserable remnant of the enthusiastic colonists, who had left their native country but a few months before, full of hope and expectation, contrived at last to re-embark. Some died on the voyage home, and very few returned to Scotland.

It is said that the ministers who accompanied the expedition were but ill suited for such duty. They were men of the unflinching Cameronian type, who, as they were rigid in their own views and observances, were utterly intolerant of even the innocent gaiety likely to be found among such a community in its prosperous outset. When disaster came and their counsels might have been a strength, their narrowness and bigotry became still more pronounced, and the colonists grew tired of their stern exclusiveness and refused to listen to their exhortations at all.

When the extent of the disaster was fully realized, the country was in the depths of despair. Many were reduced to starvation: they had ventured their all in the enterprise and lost it. Many had suffered even more: they had lost dear relations and friends. The General Assembly proclaimed a fast, first in 1700, and again in 1701.[1] Doubtless it would be

[1] Acts of Assembly.

observed with much earnestness, for a nation is sobered by a calamity such as had befallen Scotland. But the people did not fail also to express themselves strongly against the conduct of the English Government, which had treated the enterprise more as if it had been the work of a rival, than of an integral portion of the same kingdom. The king, too, did not escape his share of the censure; and his popularity, which, with all his excellences, was never very great in the northern part of his dominions, was not increased by his bearing at this juncture.

While the secular affairs of the country were in this deplorable condition, the Church was at the same time considerably agitated by a heresy which for a time threatened to be of some importance. It was originally broached by a Mademoiselle Antonia Bourignon, who having been educated in the Roman Catholic Church began to adopt extravagant views on several subjects as she reached middle age. She published a book in 1696, in which she laid claim to divine inspiration and propounded many mystical notions. She denied the necessity for a priesthood, or for the sacraments. Her doctrines were in some measure akin to those of the Quakers, but she transcended several of even their most indefinite doctrines.[1] There was, however, a highly spiritual tone pervading her teaching, and which, in conjunction with the well-known saintly character of the authoress, helped greatly to commend her views. Dr. Garden, one of the ministers of Aberdeen, went so far as to publish an apology for Madlle. Bourignon, being greatly carried away with the beautiful sentiments which she promulgated. The church courts proceeded to deal with him. The Assembly of 1701 summoned him to their bar. He did not appear, but he had previously acknowledged to the commission that he sympathized deeply with the suspected doctrines, and that he did not believe they contradicted any of the articles of the Christian faith. The Assembly, however, thought differently. They examined Madlle. Bourignon's book, and unreservedly condemned it. They also deposed Dr. Garden from the office of the ministry. The heresy, however, continued to spread for a time, and ten years afterwards, when the Assembly were engaged in drawing up a series of questions to be put to ministers at their ordina-

[1] "The Renovation of the Gospel Spirit . . . Done out of the French," London, 1707.

tion, one of these required them to disown Bourignian tenets and doctrines, along with "Popish, Arian, Socinian, and Arminian tenets, doctrines, and opinions." This question has been regularly put to all candidates for ordination ever since. It is probable, however, that not many even of those who renounced this obscure heresy had, in later times, any very distinct idea of what it really was. Certainly the congregations who heard their new minister make this profession, had no conception whatever what the Bourignianism might be which he was asked to repudiate so solemnly. And therefore it is matter for congratulation that the General Assembly of 1889, in revising this list of questions, expunged all relating to Bourignianism.[1]

The reign of King William, which had been fraught with such happy auspices, especially to the Church of Scotland, was not destined to be a long one. He had been delicate from his childhood, and the vicissitudes of his anxious life did not tend to strengthen his originally feeble constitution. Eight years before this time he had consigned his gentle queen to the grave, and life was never the same to him afterwards. His end was comparatively sudden, resulting upon a fall from his horse in which he broke his collar bone. Fever and chill ensued, and a few days' indisposition carried him off. His end was worthy of his great career. He had no wish to leave the world—on the contrary he desired to remain, if it had been the will of Providence; for the course of affairs had brought about a prospect of his being able more effectually than ever before to curb the ambition of France, and so to consolidate the balance of power in Europe, which had really been his aim throughout the whole of his course. His father-in-law, James, had died only the year before. The King of France, with extraordinary imprudence, had declared that he should regard the son of the exiled monarch as the rightful king of Britain. He had, it is true, scarcely uttered this imprudent declaration when he withdrew it and made every attempt to explain it away. But the attempt was in vain: and with the sympathy of the whole country, except of course the section which still adhered to the house of Stuart, William took up the position that the French monarch's

[1] Acts of Assembly, 1889.

deliberate statement justified him in deeming it a duty to curtail his influence among the powers of Europe. It was just then that this fatal accident occurred, and in a few hours he was obliged to realize that he must bid adieu for ever to his most cherished schemes. His serenity, however, was undisturbed. He manifested the greatest anxiety for the comfort of his old friends, even when the last moments were hastening on apace. For those who had been companions of his youth he retained the warmest affection. He declared himself to be resting firmly on the great doctrines of the Protestant faith; and he expired while the bishops in waiting were reading the office of the Church of England in which the soul of the dying is commended to God.

He has been censured for inciting his wife to unnatural conduct in depriving her father of his throne and of his kingdom. But the truth is that James had exiled himself, and by his gross outrages upon the best feelings of his people he had deprived himself of his regal patrimony. A revolution was demanded. Nothing could have averted it. The country and the world were fortunate in the highest degree that through the instrumentality of a prince, than whom none was more fitted to guide it, the most brilliant revolution of modern days was accomplished without bloodshed, and the monarch who had forfeited his title was succeeded by one who might have ere long succeeded to it by inheritance. William's reign was especially a blessing to Scotland; for no one knew better the principles of that toleration which in those days was little known, and of which all parties in Scotland at the time were ignorant, yet which they, of all others, had the most occasion to practise.

The General Assembly had met a few days before the tidings of William's death became known. The customary message from the king had been conveyed to them by the commissioner, and they had as usual resolved upon a dutiful reply. But while they were in the act of drawing it up, the news of the king's serious illness reached Edinburgh. They added a clause expressive of their deep sympathy, assuring his Majesty that they should betake themselves to prayer that God might be pleased to grant him speedy recovery. It was on the 11th of March that they despatched this letter. Three days previously

William had expired. The death of the king dissolved the Assembly. But the commission continued to sit. A few days after it had heard of William's death it forwarded an address to Queen Anne, who had now succeeded to the throne, returning thanks to her Majesty for the assurances of protection which she had given to the Privy Council, and declaring that they would defend and maintain her throne to the utmost.[1]

The Episcopal party also approached the new sovereign. They knew that Anne was a warm adherent of the Episcopal Church, and they begged that their claims might now be taken into consideration. They asked that they might be admitted to such parishes as had a majority of Episcopalians amongst the community, saying that the Presbyterians need not be afraid of such a measure if they were as numerous as they were wont to allege. Afterwards they assumed a humbler tone, beseeching that the queen would have compassion on their poverty-stricken condition. They said that they owed their lives in many cases to the charity of such good people as thought it a disgrace that men consecrated to the altar should be allowed to perish in a Christian land for lack of bread.[2] The queen, as might be supposed, answered this last petition with kindly consideration. It was not likely she could do much to alleviate their distressing want.

The subject in which Queen Anne and her advisers were most anxiously interested was the union of the two kingdoms. The debates of the next few years are occupied with little else. The geographical position of Scotland and England, integral portions of an island of but limited extent and having many interests naturally common, made it in the highest degree desirable that they should form one kingdom. Many attempts had been made by England to accomplish this result by force. They were always resisted vigorously by the Scots, and the resistance occasioned some of the most brilliant events in the national history. The two kingdoms had been united under one crown for a hundred years, but their separate government and jurisprudence still continued, and—as was shown in the Darien scheme—their interests were regarded by many of both countries as directly antagonistic.

[1] Acts of Assembly, 1702. [2] Stephen's "Hist.;" Skinner's "Hist."

William had been most anxious that such a union should be consummated. He had realized at a very early period of his reign that it was absolutely essential to the higher prosperity of both the kingdoms. It was one of the projects to accomplish which he could have wished to have lived a few years longer. But his counsellors were equally alive to the advantages of the movement, and it was one of the first topics which Queen Anne discussed after her accession.

A new Parliament had to be elected in Scotland, for the Convention of Estates, which had been declared a Scottish Parliament, had subsisted during the whole of the previous reign. The last of the Scottish parliaments was therefore duly summoned. The "riding" took place with great pomp from Holyrood to the Parliament House—an ancient ceremony of which the commissioner's procession to the General Assembly is a vestige—and the deliberations upon the momentous topic were entered on.

The movement was far from popular. The mass of the people, and many of the nobility and country gentlemen, felt that their nationality was being thrown away, and that they were being absorbed by the very nation against whose encroachments their fathers had striven for many centuries. The Jacobites saw that it would put an end to their prospects of restoring the Stuart dynasty; the Presbyterians were not unnaturally timorous lest their favourite ecclesiastical polity should be displaced by so powerful an institution as the English establishment; and the new independent party, whose chief aim was to promote the commercial prosperity of the kingdom, were alarmed lest the provisions of the projected union should not permit that freedom in commercial enterprise which they desired. The popular feeling was excited to the utmost. The queen's commissioner had to be protected as he passed from Holyrood to the Parliament House and back again. The negotiators discussed their scheme, sometimes in a cellar in the High Street, sometimes in an arbour in Moray House in the Canongate, according as they could most conveniently take refuge from the populace. The most eloquent and patriotic of the Scottish legislators and nobility declaimed against the proposal. The young Lord Belhaven delivered an oration against it, which ranks even

yet as amongst the finest efforts of oratory. Nevertheless the provisions of the treaty were discussed one after the other. The tact of its promoters, and the sagacity of the English ministers —perhaps also the power of English gold—made themselves felt; and after one of the most stormy periods in the history of the Scottish legislature, the efforts of the true lovers of their country were crowned with success. The provisions, as originally drafted, were agreed to, and the Parliament of Scotland adjourned to meet no more. When Lord Seafield, the president of the assembly, had touched the Act with the royal sceptre, he said—"And there's the end of an auld sang."

It is remarkable that during the whole of these stormy debates the General Assembly stood aloof. The matter of the union is never mentioned in any of its Acts. The difficulties, which had been felt by the Presbyterians at first as to the likelihood of their favourite ecclesiastical system being in danger, were speedily set at rest by the Act of Security, which the English as well as the Scottish legislators cordially agreed to. By this statute, which still remains in force, it was ordained that the government of the Church by kirk sessions, presbyteries, synods, and general assemblies should continue unalterable, and be the only government of the Church within the kingdom of Scotland. Although they did not openly countenance the union, it was well known that the most sagacious and politic of the ministers warmly approved of it. Carstares gave it the weight of his statesmanlike aid. He had been appointed principal of the University of Edinburgh at the death of William, and he soon acquired the influence in Scottish ecclesiastical affairs to which his great experience and sagacity well entitled him. He saw that the union of the kingdoms would be a real benefit, and he did his utmost to remove the prejudices of his countrymen and to silence the clamour that was raised against it.

It was a wise and a patriotic movement. The true prosperity of the country dates from its accomplishment. And the promoters of so great a national boon, whether lay or clerical, deserve to be held in undying honour for their far-seeing wisdom and their resolute courage.

CHAPTER XXI.

FROM THE UNION TO THE RESTORATION OF PATRONAGE, 1712.

Form of Process—Decorum in public worship—Psalmody—Controversial literature: Sage, Calder, Anderson—Penny bridals—Episcopal encroachments—Act against Innovations—Case of Mr. Greenshields—Triumph of the Episcopal party—Toleration Act—Civil penalties annulled—Restoration of patronage.

For a short time after the events just narrated, the Church of Scotland was occupied chiefly with arrangements for carrying out more effectively the details of her ordinary work.

The "Form of Process" before the church courts "in relation to scandals and censures," or in other words, by which the ministers and members of the Church may be prosecuted for offences committed by them, or alleged against them, was passed into law in the year of the union.[1] It is a document of great value, and it is still in full force. Some of the provisions are of course somewhat antiquated, for it is nearly two hundred years since it was drawn up, and the necessities and habits of the present day are very different from what they were in those times. But it is evident that the divines and church lawyers who drafted its provisions had a true appreciation of the principles of law and justice which ought to regulate all such painful investigations. It is much to be regretted that it is not better known, and more carefully studied by the members of the church courts. Instruction in this, and in all the branches of ecclesiastical jurisprudence ought indeed to form an indispensable portion of the *curriculum* of students who are in training for the ministry. It should never be forgotten that while they are ordained to preach the Gospel, the important duty also devolves upon them of ruling in the Church. Training for this work is quite as necessary as for the other parts of the ministerial office; and there can be no doubt that many of the errors into which the Church has fallen, and the dangers into which she has allowed herself to be drawn, may be traced to

[1] Acts of Assembly, 1707.

imperfect and ill-instructed views of the principles of church law, and to a culpable ignorance of the wise and wholesome forms which the Church has herself laid down for her own guidance.

Of late years the attention of the Church has been much directed towards the improvement of the conduct of public worship. No one who has reached middle life can fail to be struck, as he reviews the wonderful change which has passed over the outward aspect of our worship within his own recollection. Instrumental music, hearty and harmonious singing, reverent postures, simple and devotional utterance in prayer, seemliness and propriety in the conduct of all the parts of worship, beauty and dignity in the edifices where the people assemble for this purpose, are now prevalent over a great part of Scotland, although such things could not be said at the commencement of the present half of the century. It is not surprising that the decorum which we are only now beginning to appreciate fully was sadly lacking in the times of which we are writing. Tradition tells us this, and so do the customs which came down even to our own time, and which it was so difficult to eradicate. But the Acts of the Assembly of that period, and the pamphlets and literary squibs which are still extant, go perhaps further in giving us a vivid idea of the church customs and manners of those days. There is an Act of Assembly, for instance, "concerning people's behaviour in time of divine worship," enjoining all ranks "to forbear bowing and other expressions of civil respect, and entertaining one another with discourses while divine worship was performing."[1] Another Act recommends Presbyteries to endeavour to secure as parish schoolmasters persons who could sing the metrical psalms, so that the young may be instructed in singing the praises of God in the sanctuary.[2] The cultivation of sacred music had at this time fallen greatly into abeyance amongst the Presbyterians. It was not always so, for there are abundant indications that in earlier and purer times it was carefully cherished. But the days had gone by when a multitude such as welcomed the return of one of the popular preachers of the Reformation from banishment could break out as they marched

[1] Acts of Assembly, 1709. [2] Ibid., 1713.

up the High Street of Edinburgh, into the grand old Psalm (cxxiv.):—

"Now Israel may say, and that truly,"

and give it in its splendid four-part harmony. The persecutions of the preceding century, and the Puritan spirit which possessed the Covenanters, greatly quenched the love of sacred song. The preachers set store upon the preaching only. They ignored almost entirely the other exercises of the sanctuary. But the Act in question shows that a proper spirit was beginning to revive, although as yet, and for long afterwards, it was but in feeble measure.

Those who are curious in such matters, as giving an indication of the manners of the age, would do well to consult such works as those of Bishop Sage, who, although he was a bitter opponent of Presbytery, and may be supposed to have coloured his narrative highly, yet gives a vivid picture—and we cannot suppose it altogether an untrue one—of the grotesque irreverence which often characterized the Presbyterian worship.[1] The book in which he details the somewhat coarse characteristics of Presbyterianism is one of considerable ability, and is a strong argument, from his own point of view, against the claims of Presbytery to have accomplished the Reformation. Of the same character, although not of the same ability, is Calder's "Presbyterian Eloquence Displayed." Anderson, of Dunbarton, afterwards of the Ramshorn Church, Glasgow, replied to these Episcopalian polemics. He did so in the same vein, with a coarseness of vituperation which would not be tolerated now in respectable literary controversy. The champions of Episcopacy found themselves thoroughly matched in invective by the Presbyterian minister. Such a style of controversy could not have been very edifying, nor could it have told for much even in those times, although truth obliges us to say that not unfrequently in matters of fact and argument the bishop and the curate had the best of it.

The Assembly did not restrict itself to enjoining propriety in public worship. It took note of the more common modes of excess in private life, and set itself strenuously to counteract them. Of the proceedings in this direction at this time,

[1] "Fundamental Charter of Presbytery."

the most notable is perhaps the Act against penny weddings. Apparently these gatherings had been greatly abused. Originally their object was a good one. The festive dance was held in some barn or place of gathering larger than the kitchen of the humble cottage, from which the bride in such cases usually emerged. The guests were not invited. Any one who contributed a penny or other small offering was welcome to his share of the enjoyment. But the habits of the time were coarse, and excesses of an indecent character appear not unfrequently to have arisen from the gatherings. The Assembly took up the matter. It revived certain old Acts against these practices. It anew discharged promiscuous dancing. It appointed the Act to be read in churches, so that none might plead ignorance, and it required the inferior courts to use diligence to see that these instructions were duly carried out. Evidently some such legislation must have been necessary from the low moral tone prevailing at the time. Doubtless the stern attempt by the recognized church courts to discountenance and prohibit such amusements goes far to account for the horror which many good people still have even at the innocent dancing of modern times, and which, although it is fast dying out, is still to be found in a certain phase of religionism.

As the reign of Queen Anne wore on, and her sympathy with the outed Episcopalians became more apparent, they, on their part, gradually took heart of grace, and began to assert themselves as they had not dared to do since the Revolution. Now that a queen was on the throne who was so much disposed to favour their pretensions, the time seemed opportune for claiming what they regarded as their inherent rights. Many of the Episcopal incumbents still held possession of their parishes in the north of Scotland. Some of these men began now to show their real sentiments more openly than before. They assembled in considerable numbers at the funerals of the nobility in their neighbourhood. Not content with reading the burial service in private, they assumed their surplices and stoles, and pronounced it at the grave.[1] Some even ventured to use the liturgy in the regular ministrations of the Lord's Day, and in some parishes copies of the Book of Common

[1] Wodrow's "Correspondence," vol. i.

Prayer were procured from England in considerable numbers, with the view of being gradually circulated among the people, and ultimately adopted.

The Presbyterian party were much incensed and not a little alarmed at these doings. Overtures were sent up to the Assembly in regard to them, and in 1707, directly after the completion of the union of the kingdoms, an Act was passed directly bearing upon these practices. It is known by the title of "the Act against Innovations in the Worship of God." The preamble of the Act declares that purity of divine worship and its uniformity have been signal blessings to the country; that any attempts at innovations in it have been disastrous; that this purity and uniformity have been secured by Acts of Parliament, especially by the recent Act of Security; and "being well informed," it goes on to say, "by representations sent from several presbyteries of this Church, that innovations, particularly in the public worship of God, are of late set up in some places in public assemblies within their respective bounds, and that endeavours are used to promote the same by persons of known disaffection to the present establishment both in Church and State, the introduction whereof was not so much as once attempted, even during the late Prelacy, . . . Therefore the General Assembly . . . doth hereby discharge the practice of all such innovations in divine worship within this Church," &c.[1]

Four years afterwards, in 1711, when the questions to be put to ministers at their ordination were agreed upon, one of them, which is still in force, required the minister to promise that he will assert, maintain, and defend "the purity of worship as presently practised in this national Church, and asserted in the 15th Act of the General Assembly, 1707, entitled, Act against Innovations in the Worship of God."[2] It may be remarked, in passing, that the Act against Innovations has sometimes been held to prohibit a great deal more than it really does. "Innovations" is a conveniently wide word, and of recent years it has been broadly asserted that any deviation from an undefined order in the conduct of public worship which, although it had no statutory sanction or even prescribed rubric, was understood to be the usage of the Church in that respect, was a viola-

[1] Acts of Assembly, xv. 1707. [2] Ibid., x. 1711.

tion of the Act and of the ordination vow. But this was a great mistake. Ministers are unquestionably held bound, by their response to the questions referred to, to abstain from innovations in the conduct of public worship. But it is the innovations pointed at in the Act of Assembly which they must abstain from, not such practices as any one who quotes the Act against them may *choose to call* innovations.

There can be no doubt as to what the practices were which the Act discountenanced. It was the practices complained of by the Presbyteries overturing the Assembly. Although they are not mentioned by name in the Act, they are indicated with sufficient distinctness. It was the reading of the English liturgy which was evidently complained of, and which was therefore prohibited. This and its variety of deviations from the common usages of the Church of Scotland in public prayer were the practices "of late set up in some places in public assemblies," and it was to promote these that "endeavours are used by persons of known disaffection to the present establishment both of Church and State"—*i.e.* by the Jacobite party. It is very necessary that this should be kept in view, for it is by no means uncommon for persons who are opposed to any change or improvement in the conduct of divine worship—although such alterations may have no connection whatever with the introduction of liturgical forms—to denounce them as inconsistent with both the letter and the spirit of the Act in question.

The legislation of the Assembly, however, which it was doubtless hoped would put an end to such objectionable practices in all time to come, was very far from accomplishing such a result. It will be noted that the General Assembly claimed the right not only of prohibiting the forms of the Church of England from being used in her own congregations, but even from being used in any part of Scotland. No toleration was to be permitted for any other form of worship than that which was established by law. The tyrannous rigour of such a prohibition was obvious. The Presbyterians were attempting now to treat the Episcopalians just as the Episcopalians had treated them when they were in power. But the Episcopalians were not disposed to submit tamely to such injustice any more than were the Presbyterians.

The Rev. James Greenshields was the first to test the power of the existing laws. He was the son of an Episcopal clergyman who had been deprived of his benefice at the Revolution. He had received orders from the Bishop of Ross, and had then gone to Ireland, where he officiated for thirteen years in the diocese of Armagh. When the prospects of Episcopacy began to improve, as was supposed, in Scotland, he returned thither, in 1709, and having taken counsel with the leaders of the movement, he opened a small chapel in the Canongate of Edinburgh. Having been dislodged by the bailies, he rented a room in the High Street, but was obliged to beat a retreat thence also. He hired a third house, however, and openly proceeded with the Episcopal service. The presbytery summoned him to their bar to answer for performing worship without their license. He refused their jurisdiction, pleading that he was in the orders of the Church of England, and answerable only for his conduct to that body. The presbytery found that he had indulged in practices contrary to the purity and uniformity of worship enjoined by the Act against Innovations, and that he had been contumacious in refusing their jurisdiction. They prohibited him from exercising his functions, and remitted the execution of their sentence to the magistrates. Greenshields appeared before the magistrates in answer to their summons. He declined to desist from the exercise of his ministry, and he was sent to jail. He now applied to the Court of Session, but the court held that his orders were invalid because they had been conferred by an "exauctorate" bishop. This was a confirmation of the presbytery's authority, but it was virtually a condemnation of the doings of Presbytery during the persecution times. All that they had done had been done, during that time, as deprived ministers. If the reasoning of the Court of Session was sound, the orders of the majority of those now forming the Church of Scotland were vitiated and invalid. The Episcopal party resolved to press the case to a final decision, and they appealed to the House of Lords.

While the case was pending, feeling ran high. Others of the Episcopal clergy followed Greenshields' example. The presbyteries denounced them, and individual ministers inveighed

against them from the pulpit. In the north, however, they held their own, and Greenshields was the only one who suffered penalties for his daring. But the intercourse between the two kingdoms was now much more frequent than before the Union. Englishmen were often found residing in various parts of the northern kingdom, and English regiments were often stationed in the Scottish garrison towns. The intolerant character of the proceedings against Greenshields and his coadjutors repelled them. They were not slow to express their disgust, and to demand that they should be at liberty to frequent the worship to which they had been accustomed. Public opinion was beginning to resent intolerance. It condemned the action of the Presbyterian ministers.[1]

Greenshields' appeal was the first case in which a decision of the Scottish courts had been reviewed by the British Parliament. The power to do so had not been directly provided for in the treaty of union. It was more an implied result of the transference of the powers of the old Scots Parliament, which had been anciently the last court of appeal, to the British House of Peers.[2] The appeal was heard in April, 1711, much against the wish of some of the more sagacious legislators, who foresaw the dire offence a decision either way would be certain to give. The decision of the Scottish courts was reversed, and the magistrates of Edinburgh, at whose instance Greenshields had been imprisoned, were found liable in heavy costs. This was a grievous blow to the Presbyterians, although it was a just decision. The Episcopalians were jubilant. Surely, they thought, this is the precursor of still better things. Nor were they disappointed. The Presbyterians were destined to be still further humiliated.

The Government, instigated by the prelatical party in Scotland, perhaps also, let us hope, by considerations of justice, resolved to bring in an Act by which the liberty of the Episcopalians to celebrate their religious rites should be formally declared. General opinion was in favour of such a measure. The impression was abroad that Presbyterianism was essentially intolerant, and that the adherents of the Church which was established in one part of the kingdom should be pro-

[1] Carstares' State Papers. [2] Hill Burton's "Hist." vol. ii.

tected in the exercise of their religious customs when they passed to the other part of it. A bill was accordingly brought into the House of Commons early in 1712, "to prevent the disturbance of the Episcopal communion in Scotland in the exercise of their religious worship." The commission of the General Assembly despatched three of their most influential members to London—among whom was Carstares—to oppose the measure. We can hardly believe that the mission could have been very welcome to Carstares, whose broad and tolerant views of church polity were as strong as ever. But probably he foresaw that this was but part of a scheme for restoring the old dynasty, or of attempts in that direction, which would be disastrous to the country. His efforts, however, and those of his coadjutors, were without avail. The Act was passed through both houses of Parliament by a large majority. Its provisions were reasonable and just. It declared that it should be lawful for the Episcopalians in Scotland to celebrate their worship in their own manner, provided their ministers were ordained by Protestant bishops, and took the oaths of allegiance and abjuration, and that their assemblies were held openly. It repealed also the law which subjected the Episcopal priest who administered baptism, or performed the ceremony of marriage, to perpetual imprisonment or to exile—an oppressive and barbarous enactment which no circumstances could justify.

There was a good deal of plotting and counter-plotting in carrying through the measure. When the Presbyterians saw that it was sure to pass they urged that the abjuration oath should be required of the Episcopalians, although it had not been included in the bill originally. The Episcopal party urged, on the other hand, that it should be made binding on all who held office; the Established clergy, they alleged, could not refuse it, when it was made imperative on a body who were practically dissenters. But while they said so, they knew that the oath was regarded as sanctioning Episcopacy and requiring the reigning monarch to conform to that form of religion; so they hoped that the Presbyterians would refuse it. It was inserted in the Act, but as the Presbyterians would not take it themselves they could not insist on its being taken by the Episcopalians, so that it became, for the time being, ineffective.

Another provision in the Act gave much offence—viz. that which declared that no civil penalties should follow upon ecclesiastical censures. Hitherto the power of the Church had been little short of that exercised by the Church of Rome. Offenders were handed over to the civil power for punishment. It had been carried too far in the case of Greenshields, who had languished in prison for many months merely for being guilty of an ecclesiastical offence. Perhaps the day of more tolerant views and juster conceptions of what spiritual censures implied was beginning to dawn. By the Toleration Act, at any rate, the old civil penalties could no longer be imposed. The Church's censures were henceforth to be dependent for their force and significance upon their own moral power, and the consent of the people in their propriety.

There can be no doubt that the Toleration Act was nothing more than simple justice, and justice too long delayed. It was robbed, however, of a good deal of its grace by the unquestionable leaning towards Jacobitism of those who were instrumental in carrying it through. The deep-laid schemes were already being matured which resulted, three years later, in Mar's rebellion. It was well known that the Tory Government were resolved if possible upon the restoration of the Stuarts; it was even whispered that the queen herself would have been glad to know that the succession to the throne should be secured to her brother, and should not pass to the house of Hanover. The Episcopalian party in Scotland were now openly resolved that this should be accomplished. And therefore every measure by which their grievances were redressed, however just in itself, was regarded, and not altogether without reason, as an encouragement to the disaffected in their traitorous designs, and as an indication that if a change of dynasty should ever come the Presbyterian polity should fare hard in its hands.

But there was another Act passed by this Parliament which was destined to have a still greater influence on the fortunes of the Church of Scotland in future years than those we have just referred to. This was the celebrated Act for restoring patronage. In order to understand fully the bearings of this important measure, it is necessary to recall the history of the

custom in the days of the ancient Church, and also in the early times of the Reformed Church. On this point the reader is referred to the full statement which is to be found in the dissertation on "The Church in its Relation to the Law," in a subsequent section of this work. It is unnecessary to do more here than to remind the reader how patronage took its rise from the custom of grants of land and money being gifted to the Church by lay proprietors, in order that their vassals and dependants should be instructed in the principles of religion. Such benefactors generally retained the right of appointing to their own benefices. After various vicissitudes the custom was established at the restoration of Charles II. At the Revolution, as we have already seen, it was one of the difficulties which William had to face in arranging the ecclesiastical constitution. It was finally enacted, not that patronage be wholly abolished, but that it be vested in the heritors and kirk session of vacant parishes. This arrangement was supposed to be more in accordance with popular rights than that which had hitherto prevailed. In all cases the former patron was to receive compensation for the abandonment of his right, to the extent of 600 merks; and his right was not to cease until this sum was paid over to him. Whether the times were too hard to admit of the easy collection of the stipulated sum, or whether the Church at large did not regard the privilege as worth the price to be paid for it—for it conferred no further rights upon the people than they already enjoyed—does not appear. At all events, it transpired upon investigation that during all the time the new system had been in operation, only two parishes had paid the money required and obtained the legal renunciation from the patron—the two in question being New Monkland and Old Monkland. Two more, Calder and Strathblane, had paid the money, but had not received the renunciation in a valid and legal form.

There is little doubt that the bill now introduced was promoted by the Jacobite party with a view to the restoration of Episcopacy. If the former patrons had their rights restored to them, it would not be difficult to present ministers holding prelatic views to parishes as they became vacant, and in process of time to secure so large a majority in the presbyteries as

should make the final change easy. The hope of a successful movement to restore the Stuarts stimulated their energies. But they did not put these considerations prominently forward, as may easily be imagined. And in point of fact there was little difficulty in putting forward such reasons as made their proceedings appear very plausible. The circumstance that so few of the parishes had paid the stipulated equivalent seemed to indicate that the people did not value the alleged privilege very highly. It was a hardship to the former patrons, also, that they should be kept so long in doubt whether they were to retain their position or not, and still more that the money part of the bargain should so long be withheld from them. Moreover, it was alleged that the system had in many instances been productive of unfortunate results. Disputes and unseemly contentions had taken place in regard to the election of ministers. Kirk sessions had been known to increase their numbers in order to outvote the heritors. Heritors had also created faggot votes.[1] A change was absolutely necessary. But the rights of the people were not to be infringed. They were to have the same privilege under the restoration of patronage as they had by the Act of King William—indeed, as they had enjoyed all along. They might object to the person presented, and give their reasons. That was all the power they had under the Act of 1690. They had no power of election under that Act; they had only the power of objecting, and that power they were to retain.

The commissioners from the Assembly were still in London when the bill to restore patronage was brought in. They had been enjoined to attend to the interests of the Church before Parliament, and they did their best to oppose the passing of this measure. They committed a blunder, indeed, in an important step they thought it right to take. When the bill had passed rapidly through the House of Commons, and had been sent up to the House of Lords, they drew up an elaborate petition against it. But they addressed it "To the Most Honourable the Peers of Great Britain," omitting all mention of the "Lords Spiritual." Doubtless this was intentional, for the representatives of the Church of Scotland had scruples in addressing the clergy of another Church by any such

[1] Hill Burton, ii.

title. It would have been better for their cause, however, if they had quietly regarded this as a matter of etiquette which it was not worth their while to question. As it was, the petition was rejected as informal; but when renewed in proper form, it was duly received. It is one of the noted documents of the day, singularly free from the circumlocution and vague technicality which often disfigure similar documents of the same period. But probably its inauspicious introduction robbed it of the weight it might have had. Its representations were unheeded, and the bill was passed into law.

The General Assembly was to meet on the 1st of May following. It met; and in the customary royal letter it was thought advisable to insert a paragraph to allay the irritation which it was feared might show itself. The queen referred to recent legislation, and then declared her "firm purpose to maintain the Church of Scotland as established by law." The Assembly in their answer did not disguise the "fears and jealousies" which the recent legislation had awakened in them. They formally approved also of the Acts of the commission in sending deputies to London to oppose the obnoxious measures, and they respectfully intimated also that they had "instructed and empowered their commission to advert carefully to all good opportunities, and to use all proper means and methods whereby their grievances may be properly redressed."[1]

This, however, was all that was done. No further protest was taken, and no action of a definite nature was resolved on. For many years, indeed, the Assembly annually remonstrated against the reimposition of patronage as a great grievance and a violation of the treaty of union. But the remonstrance came to be regarded as so much of a form that at last it was abandoned. The ecclesiastics of the day professed much alarm and anxiety as to what might be the result of the measure. But in effect they seem to have accepted it as inevitable. The measure did result in much disaster to the Church of Scotland; but this was to be traced not so much to its own character, as to the unreasonable and uncompromising manner in which it was administered by the churchmen of succeeding times.

[1] Acts of Assembly, 1712.

CHAPTER XXII.

FROM THE RESTORATION OF PATRONAGE, IN 1712, TO THE CLOSE OF THE REBELLION OF 1715.

The Christmas recess—Proposed endowment of the Episcopal clergy—Abjuration oath—Taken with a qualification—Taken absolutely—Cause of dissension among ministers—The English service set up in several places—Consternation of the Presbyterians—The Cameronians—A party in the Church ally themselves with them—Hepburn of Urr and M'Millan of Balmaghie—The Auchenshauch Declaration—Death of Queen Anne—Her character—Accession of George I.—The king favourable to the Church of Scotland—Death and character of Principal Carstares—Mar's rebellion—Sheriffmuir—Country laid waste by Mar—End of the rising—Effect upon the Church.

THERE were other measures carried by Parliament in 1712 decidedly in favour of the Episcopal party, and little calculated to inspire the Presbyterians with confidence. One of these was the restoration of the "Christmas recess," as it was called—in other words, permitting the lords of the Court of Session to enjoy a holiday at Christmas. The great church festivals had been denounced by the First Book of Discipline, as savouring of superstition. They had been restored by the Episcopal party when they were in power. They were again discontinued by William and Mary, as alien to the sentiments of the Presbyterians. The probability is that the long-continued session of the court from November till March was found to be inconvenient and irksome. Both court and counsel would be anxious for a pause in their labours, and it was but reasonable they should have it. Nowadays the prejudice against these observances, and the notion that they foster superstition, have most happily died down. The old festivals are regarded in their true light, as solemn anniversaries of the most significant events in the Christian year, which may tend to foster the higher spirituality of those who use them as seasons for thoughtful and prayerful meditation—times also when the deliverance of the world by the sacrifice of Christ may be commemorated with sober joy. In this light they have come again to be regarded by many in the Church of Scotland, and there is a widespread and growing feeling in favour of their observance. But it was not unnatural that the measure by which the Christmas holiday—or the "Yule

vacance," as it was generally called—was restored to the Court of Session, should be regarded with much suspicion. The prejudice against the observance was still strong. It was one of the most noted customs of the prelatic church. Was not this another indication that everything was being prepared for a return to Episcopacy, notwithstanding the fair speeches which emanated from the throne?

But there was still more to come. A motion was made on the 31st of May, in the House of Commons, and it was agreed to, that an address be presented to the Queen praying her "to apply the rents of the late bishops' lands in North Britain, that remained in possession of the Crown, for the support of such of the Episcopal clergy there as should take the oaths to her Majesty." Shortly afterwards the queen intimated that she had acceded to the request. Apparently, for some reason now unknown, this charitable provision for the Episcopal ministers was never carried out.[1] From considerations of kindliness and charity, this is, of course, to be regretted. But as part of the legislation of the day, the spirit and tendency of which are unmistakable, it is no wonder that the Presbyterians regarded it as another indication, added to the many which had already been given, that the cause so dear to them was in the greatest jeopardy.

As the summer and autumn of this eventful year wore on, the ministers became anxious as to how they should bear themselves, in view of their being called to take the abjuration oath. It will be remembered that the Presbyterian party had contrived to have a provision inserted in the Toleration Act that the Episcopal clergy should be compelled to take it. But the Episcopalians, while they could not with any propriety decline to take the oath, however obnoxious to them as Jacobites, were more than a match for their Presbyterian brethren in astuteness. They had influence enough to get the provision extended to all office-bearers in the Church in Scotland; and the Presbyterians saw with dismay that the provision, which they had made for the confusion of their rivals, was about to involve themselves in its toils. Whoever took this oath abjured the Pretender and swore to maintain the succession to the crown,

[1] Cunningham's "Hist.," ii. 364, note.

as it was settled by certain Acts of the British Parliament. But these Acts required that the monarch should be in communion with the Church of England; and the Presbyterians found that (as many of them renounced the Episcopal form of church government as unscriptural) they were in at least as bad a plight as the Episcopalians, who must renounce their Jacobitism if they took the oath sincerely.

The day, however, was approaching when they must make up their minds. They put off taking it as long as they could, but the 28th of October was the last day of grace. Carstares set the example. Wodrow relates[1] that, accompanied by a number of the ministers of Edinburgh and the neighbourhood, he repaired to a meeting of justices, and having given in a document to which they all adhered, declaring that they interpreted the oath in its literal sense, and did not hold it as in any sense approving of Episcopacy or binding the reigning monarch to that faith, they took the oath, but did so under protest. A great crowd, however, had gathered at the door; and some of them, says the writer to Wodrow, describing the scene, "reviled the ministers as they went in and came out."

Similar proceedings were taken in various parts of Scotland by such of the ministers as were "clear," as it was then termed —*i.e.* clear for taking the oath. Many, however, were clear for taking it without qualification, and did so accordingly. But this was the occasion of much bitterness between the ministers who took the oath and those who did not—the non-jurants, or "nons," as they were shortly denominated.[2] Many of the justices refused to allow the oath to be taken with a qualification.[3] Frequently in these circumstances the ministers gave way and took the oath as it stood. But the non-jurants knew that they had exposed themselves to fine and deprivation. They were liable in the exorbitant sum of £500 sterling. Occasionally it was whispered that some neighbouring laird or nobleman had received a gift of the forfeitures, so that the conscientious clergy who declined the oath on any terms had the prospect of being subjected to the risk of having

[1] Correspondence, vol. i.

[2] The "Non-intrusion" party, before the secession of 1843, were often dubbed by the same title.

[3] Wodrow, vol. i.

their fines exacted by persons who were unscrupulous and powerful, wholly irresponsible for their actions, and not above doing what the Government would shrink from. In the end it turned out that these fears were groundless. So many of the ministers refused to take the oath, or took it after making such a declaration as rendered it meaningless, that the Government hesitated to proceed against them. Many of them quite expected to be subjected to the same experience as their fathers had undergone fifty years before, and to be driven from their pulpits and their homes. But the Government of Anne was wiser than the Government of Charles, and practically shut its eyes to the recusancy which prevailed so widely. A breach was, however, made between the two classes of the ministers which was practically the renewal of the feud between the Resolutioners and Protesters, the Indulged and the Non-indulged, of the previous century. It was the forerunner also of the still wider breaches, which have been opened between the ministers of the Church, from the days immediately following those of the abjuration oath down to the present time. The more decided of the non-jurants accused their brethren, who had qualified, of inconsistency or perjury. They declared that they had forfeited all claim to the character of Christian men. Many of them refused to hold intercourse with such defaulters. They would not ask them to preach in their pulpits or to assist them at communions. The people sympathized with their non-juring ministers. They saw what they had risked for conscience' sake. It was one of those times of crisis which unfortunately have been but too frequent in the history of the Church of Scotland, when the prophecy was sadly fulfilled, "I am not come to send peace on earth, but a sword." The oath was altered five years afterwards, but the bitter feeling did not die out so easily as it arose.

Meantime the Episcopal party went on in triumph. The Jacobite section, indeed, did not generally take the oath; but where they had any scruples it was not difficult to secure aid from across the Border, from some of the English clergy who did not acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Scottish bishops, acknowledging allegiance only to their own Episcopal superior. With their assistance, and with that of such of the Scottish

Episcopalians as were less scrupulous in matters of conscience, the service was set up in many places with the full pomp and circumstance of the English ritual. Both the "clear" and the non-jurants of the Presbyterians looked on with grief and consternation. But they were helpless to oppose the doings they so deeply deplored.[1]

The more moderate in the Church were, of course, anxious that there should be no unseemly divisions amongst themselves as to their taking or refusing the abjuration oath. But there was a party amongst the laymen, and a small number amongst the ministers, that did not take the same mild view of the matter. They regarded the acceptance of the oath as a defection from the principles of true religion. Gradually they drew towards the remnants of the stern hillmen or Cameronians, who, without any stated ministry since the last of their pastors had joined the Established Church, still remained apart, nursing their conscientious but narrow and bigoted tendencies. They had given several protests as occasion and the degeneracy of the times, in their opinion, demanded. The Revolution settlement was eminently unsatisfactory to them, because it contained no mention of the Covenants. The Union was equally obnoxious. It brought the nation into sinful alliance with Prelacy. In regard to both, the company of the faithful—as they believed themselves exclusively to be—had not failed to make suitable protestations. They were always couched in terms of the deepest humility, and revealed the utmost spiritual pride. One of them was entitled:—"The Protestation, Apologetic Declaration, and Admonitory Vindication of a Poor, Wasted, Misrepresented Remnant of the Suffering, Anti-Popish, Anti-Prelatic, Anti-Erastian, Anti-Sectarian, True Presbyterian Church in Scotland."[2]

In the Church itself there were some ministers who sympathized with these fanatical obstructionists. The most prominent of these were Mr. Hepburn of Urr, and Mr. M'Millan of Balmaghie. For years the records of the Church courts are largely occupied with proceedings against them. They denounced the Church of Scotland as unfaithful to its principles. They declared their brethren to be self-seekers who left their sheep to

[1] Wodrow, "Account of Episcopal Service at Glasgow," vol. i.
[2] Hill Burton's "History of Scotland," vol. ii.

the ravenous wolf. Hepburn had been imprisoned by the Privy Council, and for a time suspended from the functions of the ministry, although restored in 1699. At length, at the time of the Union, he seems to have viewed matters in a more reasonable light, which of course rendered him obnoxious to his former friends, who thenceforth regarded him as a traitor to the cause. Mr. M'Millan then assumed the clerical leadership, passing through the same experience of hostility to the church courts, ending in his deprivation—a sentence which he regarded with the utmost contempt. He still retained his position, the presbytery finding it impossible to settle any one in his place.[1]

When the matter of the abjuration oath came prominently forward, a formal demonstration and open separation from the Erastian Church of Scotland was resolved upon. On the 27th of July, 1712, the followers of the Covenants, from all parts of the Border districts, gathered at a place on the outskirts of Dumfriesshire called Auchenshauch. They renewed the Covenants and the other testimonies. They, further, adopted a testimony of their own, adapted to the time—known afterwards by the euphonious title of the "Auchenshauch Declaration." In this document they assume to themselves the position of the True Church of Scotland; they protest against all schism and sinful separation from it—a sin which they, of course, do not take to themselves; they renew the expression of their detestation and abhorrence of the oaths of allegiance, assurance, and abjuration; they bind themselves in their stations and vocations to extirpate Prelacy, and all rites, ceremonies, heresies, and false doctrines; concluding with a denunciation of all who differ from them, and an obligation to put down all such differences.[2] M'Millan was the clerical leader of this fanatical outburst. Yet ere long he discovered that the bondage of living under the domination of those who assumed such perfection of character was too grievous to be borne. In course of time his defection was so apparent that he was himself denounced; and many of the "faithful" penitentially confessed that in M'Millan's defection they were justly punished for having trusted too implicitly to the man of guile, who had deceived them at the

[1] Hill Burton's "History of Scotland," ii. [2] Wodrow's "Analecta," ii.

"Auchenshauch Wark."[1] The sect of the Cameronians has been too rigid and unbending to have ever made much impression on the country; but the movement at Auchenshauch is noteworthy as the first of the secessions from the Church of Scotland which it will be our painful duty hereafter to record.

On the 1st August, 1714, Queen Anne died. She was the last of the direct line of the Stuarts. Her reign was brilliant though brief. But this was not owing to her own aptitude for government, but rather to the splendid galaxy of talent which adorned her epoch. She was herself a person of but moderate gifts, although of irreproachable character. She had little force of will or decision of purpose, and was largely guided by those who chanced to be in her favour at the moment. She was devoted in her attachment to the Church of England—too much, or at least too openly so, to be popular among her Scottish Presbyterian subjects. The brilliance of her reign is, as we have said, to be ascribed to the extraordinary lustre of the genius that adorned it. Never perhaps in any one period has so great a number of men of splendid talents crowded every walk of life. The most sagacious statesmen ruled the political movements of the time; the most renowned generals of the age kept alive the fame of Britain's arms; and the profoundest thinkers and most sparkling wits imparted a charm to English literature which was all the more attractive from its novelty and freshness.

There was, as might have been anticipated, considerable apprehension as to how the succession to the throne would be received. The death of the queen, however, took place before the plans of the Jacobites were fully matured. For the present their schemes were nipped in the bud. The Elector of Hanover, the son of the Princess Sophia, was peaceably proclaimed, and ascended the throne shortly afterwards under the title of George I. The celebrated Tory Government of Queen Anne was dismissed from office, and a Whig Ministry took its place.

The Scottish Presbyterians were peculiarly gratified at the accession of George. He was from the first markedly disposed to show them favour. He fulfilled the requirements of the Act of Security in regard to the Scottish Church, by taking the oath required by that Act without hesitation. The Assembly met

[1] Hill Burton's "History of Scotland," ii. 63, &c.

in May, and they received from the king the fullest assurances of his determination to preserve inviolate the privileges of the Church. In return they drew up an address in which they declared their loyalty to his government, and their attachment to his person.

Principal Carstares was moderator of this Assembly, as he had been of several others. He signed the address in that capacity. But his long and useful career was now about to close. In the August of this year he was struck with apoplexy, and after lingering till the 28th of December in a lethargic state, he expired. He was without doubt the greatest churchman of his day. The Church owes him a debt of gratitude for his unceasing devotion to her highest interests, and for the wisdom with which he conducted her affairs in times of the greatest difficulty and danger. His clear and statesman-like views of church polity, his moderate and liberal sentiments upon all practical questions, his conciliatory spirit, and his genuine although unostentatious piety, deservedly raised him to the highest place in the confidence of the Church and of the country. Few men in any period of the Church's history have rendered her more solid and enduring service. Few names are more worthy of being held in remembrance.

Events of the most stirring interest now began to agitate the country. For a long time it was known that the Jacobite plotters had been busily at work on their dangerous schemes; and shortly after the accession of George I. they resolved to make an effort on behalf of the Stuarts. The Earl of Mar, who had been most zealous for the Union but a few years before, had now changed his policy. He had declared himself loyal to the Hanover succession. Not only individually, but as representing many of the northern nobility, he had addressed the most dutiful professions of loyalty to the king on his accession.[1] But through a greatly mistaken policy, Mar and several others in office who were suspected of leaning towards the Stuarts, and who had (by an oversight it is said) not taken a prominent part in the pageant at the king's landing, were removed from their positions. The natural result followed; and Mar, who, unscrupulous and time-serving as he was, might

[1] Hill Burton's "History of Scotland," ii.

probably have been secured as a supporter of the new dynasty, became first secretly, and at last openly, its deadly enemy.[1] After hovering about the court at St. James's for nearly a year in hope of retrieving his position, and finding that there was less likelihood of doing so as the weeks rolled by, he suddenly left London and hastened down to Scotland. Under pretence of joining a great hunting party in Mar Forest, he assembled the more prominent Jacobite leaders at his castle of Kildrummie. Having produced his commission from the Pretender as commander-in-chief for Scotland, or a declaration that he should be so appointed,[2] the standard of insurrection was hoisted at Braemar. A simultaneous movement took place in Northumberland, although by no means on so large a scale as had been expected. It was of no practical help in the campaign, however, and the troops which had been collected surrendered to the royal forces at Preston. The Duke of Argyll, who had been entrusted with the command of the royalist forces in Scotland, was closely watching Mar's proceedings. He saw the necessity of preventing the rebels from crossing the Forth, and so gaining access to the south country. Stationing his troops at Stirling for this purpose, he awaited Mar's approach from the north; and having learned that he was marching from Auchterarder to force the passage of Stirling Bridge, he advanced beyond Dunblane to meet him. The armies met on the Sheriffmuir on the 13th of November. The battle was bloody, although indecisive. The right wing of the rebels defeated the left wing of the royalists, and the left wing of the rebels was in like manner vanquished by the right wing of the royalists. Mar retired to Perth, and Argyll to Stirling. The engagement afterwards became the subject of one at least of the many humorous songs of the period, which did so much to keep alive the Jacobite sentiment.

But in order to hinder Argyll from pursuit, Mar had recourse to the barbarous expedient of laying waste the country behind him, and burning the houses and villages which might afford shelter to his pursuers. Crieff, Auchterarder, Muthill,

[1] Hill Burton's "History of Scotland," ii.

[2] There seems doubt as to whether Mar actually held the commission at first. (Hill Burton's "Hist. of Scotland," ii.)

and Dunning suffered in this manner. It was a bitterly cold winter. The snow lay on the ground to a great depth. The poor people who lived in these devoted centres were turned out ruthlessly from their comfortable homes, and every vestige of a roof which might afford them even temporary shelter was committed to the flames. The manse of Muthill was thus destroyed. A very old woman who lived in it, the minister's grandmother, was at the point of death when the soldiers arrived to execute their cruel order. As might be anticipated, they paid no heed to the remonstrances of the occupants or to the melancholy circumstances. The old lady had to be carried out if they would not leave her to perish in the flames, and she died amongst the snow where they were compelled to lay her down. Both James and Mar attempted to extenuate this heartless procedure as one of the necessities of warfare. They hoped also at no distant date, on the success of the enterprise, to make reparation to the ruined peasantry. It is needless to say that the success they hoped for was not realized; and although James might, at comparatively slight sacrifice, have made some amends to those whom he regarded as his subjects, their sufferings were not so deeply impressed upon his memory as to linger in it after he had regained his asylum. He had landed at Peterhead while he fancied the campaign was successful. But as Argyll marched northward he retired to Montrose, whence, along with Lord Mar, he escaped to France. The army made the best of its way to Badenoch, where they speedily deserted their ranks and betook themselves to their own homes.

The Church gave no uncertain sound at this crisis. She saw that Presbyterianism was bound up with the fate of the existing Government. Scarce any of the ministers identified themselves with the rebellion. In the north, where Mar for a time was ruler of the country, the Episcopalian party had triumphed. Many of the Presbyterian ministers were obliged to fly from their homes and their parishes.[1] The Pretender gave no indication that he would even secure the Protestant faith, if he should succeed. When the insurrection was finally at an end the Assembly appointed a day of thanksgiving, and voted an address of congratulation to the king. The Episcopalians who had

[1] Wodrow's "Correspondence," vol. ii.

openly espoused the Pretender's cause were treated, as was only natural, with severity. They were removed from the benefices which in many instances they had retained; and the Acts against them, which had been held in abeyance, were now put in force. From this period the Presbyterians began to be looked upon as friends of the Government, in contradistinction to the Episcopalian party, who had proved themselves hostile. The ministers of the Establishment were taken into confidence by the State. They were consulted on many important matters. The Episcopalians, on the other hand, were regarded with suspicion. They lay from this time forward, and for many years, under the shade of disability. The effect upon the Presbyterian ministers was what might be anticipated. They gradually became more loyally attached to the reigning powers. The landed proprietors were disposed in general to support the Presbyterian Church. Many of the old patrons had forfeited all their rights in consequence of their part in the rebellion, and their right of patronage amongst the rest.[1] To some extent, therefore, it is reasonable to believe, these circumstances served to reconcile the Church even to the measure by which patronage was reimposed. The annual protest against it continued to be made. But as the Episcopal clergymen had now no chance of benefiting by the exercise of the power, as it was only the Presbyterian ministers who could be recognized by the patrons, and as these were completely under the control of the Presbyterian church courts, they began to feel that it lay with themselves to say whether or not patronage could really do serious damage. If the Church took such effectual measures with her licentiates as to take care that none were permitted to enter the ministry who were not fitted in a measure at least to discharge the duties of a parish, patronage was really disarmed of its power of doing evil. The protests accordingly continued to be made, but they became feebler every year, until at last they were abandoned as an unmeaning form.

[1] Wodrow's "Correspondence," vol. ii.

CHAPTER XXIII

FROM THE REBELLION OF 1715 TO THE CONCLUSION OF THE MARROW CONTROVERSY, 1724.

Professor Simson's first case—"The Auchterarder Creed"—The Marrow controversy—The sentence—Boston of Ettrick republishes the Marrow—Hetherington's strictures on the sentence—The Commission of Assembly—Agrarian troubles—Wise deliverance of the General Assembly—Scottish Episcopacy—The Usages—Union with the Eastern Church—Collegiate and Usager bishops—Unseemly division.

When a return of external tranquillity permitted the Church to direct its thoughts to its own more immediate concerns, matters of grave import forced themselves upon its attention. The first was the case of Mr. John Simson, professor of divinity in the University of Glasgow, who had for some years been suspected of teaching erroneous doctrines. He seems to have been rather disliked by his brethren, on account of the haughtiness of his bearing. They did not, however, proceed against him; and notwithstanding the continuance of the rumours as to his heresy, no step was taken until Mr. Webster, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, brought the matter under the notice of the Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, and also of the General Assembly, with the result that the Presbytery of Glasgow were enjoined to receive and inquire into any charges which he might bring against the professor. The charges were made, and duly replied to by Professor Simson. The case came up to the Assembly of 1715, and a committee was appointed, after considerable debate, to investigate the precise nature of the alleged heresy, and to report.

The rebellion came in the way, and two years elapsed before the committee gave in the result of their labours. But they did so in 1717. Simson asserted strongly, not only that he did not hold the opinions imputed to him, but that he had often refuted them, and was ready to do so again. There were indications of loose views, however, upon various points in his answers. The Assembly was perplexed. It was a charge amounting to Arminianism which had been preferred, and while it was denied in the answers, it was practically admitted in the

expositions which accompanied them. A resolution was passed, after much deliberation, vindicating the orthodoxy of the church views, condemning the opinions complained of, and although not asserting that the charges against Simson had been proved, finding that he had used expressions which were capable of being misinterpreted, and cautioning him to be more guarded in the language he made use of in the future.[1] The finding was unanimous, but feeling ran high. Simson's friends were indignant, but they acquiesced. The opposite party hinted at secession from the Church if anything less were done. The professor himself, like a wise man, remained silent, glad no doubt to be rid of a process which had vexed him so long, without more serious consequences. So the case ended for the present, but not finally, as we shall soon see.

A case arising, indirectly at least, out of the prosecution of Professor Simson was also decided by this Assembly. The presbyteries seem to have been greatly alarmed lest the heretical views, said to be promulgated by Simson, should spread through the Church. The Presbytery of Auchterarder, which had figured conspicuously before this time in the church courts, and was destined to do so still more prominently in after days, was brought to the bar of the Assembly, directly after the case from Glasgow had been disposed of. They had resolved to take measures to stamp out any incipient indications of heresy within their own bounds. A young man named William Craig had appeared before them, as a candidate for license to preach the Gospel. The presbytery licensed him, but they suspected that he was tainted with the objectionable views. He had asked for an extract of his license, and they resolved to test him further before granting this. Accordingly they formulated six propositions, to which they required him to assent. He assented, but in so hesitating and unsatisfactory a fashion, that the presbytery thought their suspicions confirmed, and refused to grant the extract he had craved. But the brethren of Auchterarder, in their zeal for the purity of the faith, had themselves become liable to a charge of heresy. Craig appealed against their decision, and the case came up to the Assembly. It then appeared that one of the propositions, to which he had assented

[1] Acts of Assembly, 1717.

at the desire of the presbytery, was in the following terms:— "I believe that it is not sound and orthodox to teach that we must forsake sin in order to our coming to Christ, and instating us in covenant with God."

It had spread far and wide that the young man had been required to subscribe this article, and the matter was discussed even in the London coffee-houses by the wits and essayists. The Assembly debated the subject at length. They found at last that the presbytery had no title to propose any other formula to their students and probationers than that which had been adopted by the Assembly itself. They also declared their abhorrence of the proposition which had been formulated, and they appointed the presbytery to appear before the commission to explain it, or to suffer censure. It had been argued, however, in the Assembly that this article of the "Auchterarder Creed," as the new formula was somewhat contemptuously called, although capable of a wrong sense, was also capable of being interpreted in a manner perfectly reasonable and orthodox. The party who sustained Craig's appeal asserted that it inculcated the worst form of Antinomianism, inasmuch as it seemed to indicate that there was no necessity to repent of sin or even to turn from it, if only the sinner had faith in Christ. This was the ground of their "abhorrence" of the proposition. On the other hand, it was answered, that although the proposition was unguardedly expressed, it was not intended to convey any such impression, but only that the sinner must come to Christ in his sins, and trust to His work in order that he be accepted of God. This did not imply that there must not also be a strong and persevering effort to get rid of the sins. When the presbytery appeared before the commission they declared that this was exactly what they meant, and so the matter ended. But many in the Assembly and throughout the Church were not slow to assert that the presbytery had been wilfully misunderstood, that they had been hardly dealt with, and that if they were to be so severely censured for a mere error of judgment and an inaccurate phrase when they were trying to maintain the doctrine of the Church, a severer sentence should have been meted out to the professor, whose persistent teaching of what must be set down as heretical doc-

trine, however he might now repudiate it, was really the cause of the mistake which the Presbytery of Auchterarder had committed. This dissatisfaction was not easily removed, and ere long it became still more pronounced and perilous.

Further difficulties were yet in store for the Church, arising, in a sense, at least, from the same source. After the debate on the Auchterarder propositions, Mr. Thomas Boston of Ettrick, the author of a well-known religious book, "The Fourfold State," happening to sit beside Mr. Drummond, minister of Crieff, a member of the Presbytery of Auchterarder, told him that he had found the questions raised by the propositions of the presbytery exceedingly well discussed in a book called the "Marrow of Modern Divinity," which he had discovered while visiting one of his former parishioners in Simprin—a soldier who had served in Cromwell's army, and who had brought the book from England on his return home from the wars. Boston had studied this work a good many years before the Auchterarder process came up; but when that discussion took place he at once recalled it, as a treatise likely to counteract the evil which it was believed was spreading in the Church. Mr. Drummond, who was a good man, but not a man of parts, borrowed the book from Mr. Boston, and was greatly delighted with it. He strongly recommended it to his friends, and as they were equally pleased with it, they resolved to republish it, with a commendatory preface by Mr. Hog of Carnock.

The book, which, immediately on its republication, became widely known in Scotland, was written by a Mr. Edward Fisher, a commoner of Brasenose College, Oxford. It was published originally in 1646. It purports to be a dialogue regarding the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, carried on by Evangelista, a minister of the Gospel; Nomista, a legalist; Antinomista, an Antinomian; and Neophitus, a young Christian. There was also a sequel, or second part of the work, concerning the import of the ten commandments, in which the dialogue is carried on by Evangelista; Nomologista, a prattler of the law; and Neophitus. The phraseology of the book evidently commended itself to the ministers who had framed the ambiguous article in the "Auchterarder Creed" which the Assembly had condemned.

The excitement as to the soundness of the "Marrow" had now become so great that Mr. Hog, who had prefixed the commendatory notice to it on its republication, felt compelled to publish a pamphlet in its defence. This was early in 1719. When the Synod of Fife assembled for its spring meeting, Principal Haddow of St. Andrews, the moderator for the time, took up the doctrine of the "Marrow" in the opening sermon, and severely criticised it. The synod asked him to publish the sermon, and Hog published a reply.

The Assembly, when it met in May, issued general instructions to its commission to inquire whether the prohibition of the "Auchterarder Creed" was being observed, and whether any books or pamphlets bearing upon the question had been published. If they were adverse to the doctrine of the Church, the commission was to deal with their authors.[1] This was not a direct censure of the "Marrow," but it foreshadowed what was in store. The commission, through a committee of its number, examined Hog, Warden of Gargunnock, Brisbane of Stirling, and Hamilton of Airth, who were all suspected of being infected with the unsound doctrine of the "Marrow." Their explanations, however, were satisfactory.[2] But when the committee came to examine the book itself, they were by no means satisfied with what they discovered there. They professed to have found five distinct particulars in which it was unsound—viz. that assurance was of the essence of faith; that the atonement was universal; that holiness was not necessary to salvation; that the fear of punishment and the hope of reward were not allowed as motives of a believer's obedience; and that the believer is not under the law as a rule of life.[3] The commission adopted the report of its committee, and reported in similar terms to the General Assembly. This report was allowed to lie on the table for some days, and then, after a very short debate, a finding was come to, declaring that the passages quoted from the "Marrow" were contrary to Scripture, and to the Confession of Faith, and enjoining the ministers of the Church to warn their parishioners against the book.

There were only four in the Assembly who opposed this finding.[4] But there were many in the Church, although not that year

[1] Acts of Assembly, 1719. [2] Boston's "Memoirs." [3] Acts of Assembly, 1720. [4] Ibid.

in the Assembly, who took a different view of the doctrine of the "Marrow." When the finding became known it was discussed in all its bearings. It was asserted that the condemnation of the book was pronounced upon an examination of passages isolated from the context, and that the volume, as a whole, was not chargeable with the objectionable tenets. The holders of this view were not disposed to acquiesce in the finding, and they prepared a document to be presented to the next General Assembly, praying that the decision upon the "Marrow" might be reconsidered. The men who signed this representation were henceforth known by the name of the "Marrow Men." They were twelve in number: Hog of Carnock, Boston of Ettrick, Williamson of Inveresk, Bonar of Torphichen, Wilson of Maxton, Kid of Queensferry, Ebenezer Erskine of Portmoak, Ralph Erskine of Dunfermline, Wardlaw of Dunfermline, Davidson of Galashiels, Bathgate of Orwell, and Hunter of Lilliesleaf. Some of these were men of ability and determination, and were afterwards destined to take an important part in the church questions of the day. The representation was duly laid on the table of the Assembly. The sudden illness of the commissioner caused that Assembly to be of brief duration. But it handed over the document to the commission, with instructions to examine it and to report to next Assembly.

When the Assembly met in 1722 the report was presented. It entered anew and very minutely into the doctrine of the "Marrow;" it specified the passages in which that work appeared to contain erroneous doctrine; and it adduced the passages from the Scriptures, and the standards, which it seemed to controvert. It defended the action of the General Assembly in condemning the book; but while it strongly reprobated the conduct of the representers in perversely refusing to submit to the previous decision of the Assembly, and declared that such conduct merited severe censure, yet the Assembly which adopted this report contented itself with repeating the warning against the doctrine of the "Marrow" which had been previously issued, and administering a rebuke to the representers. It was hoped that this mild procedure might deter them from similar courses in the future. This decision was carried by a hundred and thirty-four against five; but the representers, although they sub-

mitted to the rebuke, protested directly afterwards in strong terms that they would not be prevented from preaching the truth, as contained in the various historical documents of the Church. Doubtless they regarded the doctrine of the "Marrow" as identical with that of these famous writings. Their protest was not received.[1]

A year afterwards the controversy was revived, when the case of Mr. Gabriel Wilson came before the Assembly. Mr. Wilson, the minister of Maxton, was, as has been noticed, one of the Marrow men. During the time when the process was pending, he was elected moderator of his synod, and according to the usual custom he had to preach a sermon at the opening of the court six months afterwards. Wilson took the opportunity, with at least questionable taste, of discussing the "Marrow" doctrine. This naturally gave offence to his brethren, who had shown their respect for his personal character by electing him to the moderatorship, even when his opinions upon important points of doctrine were under public discussion. The sermon was published under the title of "The Trust." A process was commenced against Wilson, which, after passing through the inferior courts, came up to the Assembly in 1723.

The committee appointed to investigate the case reported that his error was more an incautious use of language than absolute heresy. The Assembly adopted the report, and admonished Mr. Wilson to be more careful in future. At the same Assembly, the translation of a Mr. Hepburn from Torryburn to Edinburgh was opposed, because if the translation should take place the Marrow men would have a majority in the Presbytery of Dunfermline, and would be able to license young men holding their own views, and to fill up parishes becoming vacant with such men. It was resolved that if Mr. Hepburn were translated, a minister should not be settled in Torryburn except by the permission and approval of the Synod of Fife.[2] This is the last we hear of the "Marrow" controversy at the time. The church courts had no more to do with it. But the doctrines were not abandoned by those who had maintained them. Boston published a new edition of the "Marrow" in 1727, with notes and explanations at great length. He did so under a feigned name, "Philalethes Irenæus,"

[1] Wodrow's "Correspondence," ii. 654. [2] Ibid. iii. 51.

but it was well understood who the author of the new edition was. No notice, however, was taken of the book, and the excitement gradually died away.

But upwards of a hundred years afterwards the proceedings of the Assembly, and of the Church generally, were recalled, and criticised with much severity. The author of the book in which this criticism finds expression, was a warm defender of the party which ultimately seceded from the Church in 1843. He prefaces his account of the period now under review by the statement that the Church was corrupted by the admission of the Episcopal curates, who were retained in their benefices after the Revolution. "From this time forward," he continues, "the Church of Scotland presents the melancholy aspect of a declining and unfaithful Church. . . . To trace faithfully the sad steps of her defection must be now our painful and unwelcome task."[1] In accordance with these views, he regards the prosecution of the Marrow men, and the opposition to the book itself, as an instance of the hatred of evangelical truth evinced by the section of the Church which afterwards became known as the Moderate party.[2] No charge could be more unfounded. The prelatical party were by this time under all the disability incident to their having espoused the cause of a futile rebellion. Their influence upon the counsels of the Church was now, and had been for many years, absolutely annihilated. The doctrines complained of in "The Marrow of Modern Divinity" were without doubt contained in it, although it may well be admitted that they lurked in isolated passages, rather than that they declared themselves in the general tendency of the book. A juster view of the proceedings of the church courts of that period, is to regard the members as really solicitous for the purity of the Church's doctrine, and desirous that no countenance should be given to the disastrous heresies of Antinomianism. It is quite true that the supporters of the "Marrow" had not the remotest intention of propagating or maintaining these heresies. Their error was in loose phraseology, not in absolute heterodoxy. But the use of unguarded language, unnoticed and unchecked, might have issued in a laxity of thought and tenet which might have ultimately

[1] Hetherington's "Church History," 585. [2] Ibid. 633-634.

led to much harm. The Marrow men did not contemplate this. They were men of a highly spiritual type. But many of their opponents were equally lofty in moral tone, and they cannot be accused of proceeding to extremities. They condemned the book, and they gave good reasons for their disapprobation of it; but they did no more than admonish the supporters of the doctrine. When their sentence was protested against, the protest was not resented. When the offence was in effect repeated by Gabriel Wilson, it was met by no stronger sentence than admonition. It is difficult to conceive how greater leniency could have been shown, unless the Church was prepared to abandon its office as the conservator of doctrine, and was to allow any error of language as well as any error of thought, to be propagated by her ministers.

When the conclusion of the "Marrow" controversy had allowed time for less pressing questions to be dealt with, the Assembly took up other matters which it was desirable to settle upon a permanent basis. One of these was the mode of appointing the body which was known then, and is known still, as the "Commission of the General Assembly." It is unnecessary to recount here the special history of this court, and the manner in which it gradually came to have the position it now holds.

The reader will find this subject fully discussed in the section of this work, The Church in its Relation to the Law. It may suffice to say in this place, that about the date at which we have now arrived the constitution of the commission formed the subject of considerable debate. From time immemorial it had been the custom of the Assembly to nominate certain of their members, to whom much of the power of the supreme court was delegated, during the period of the year when it was not in session. There were times, such as that immediately succeeding the Assembly of 1638, when the commission exercised its power with much arbitrariness.[1] When the affairs of the Church were settled at the Revolution, the practice of appointing the commission was renewed. A special Act of Parliament empowered the Assembly to appoint a commission for the purpose of purging out scandalous and inefficient ministers.[2] Two commissions were appointed, as we have already seen. The

[1] Cunningham's "Church Hist.," ii. 389. [2] Act 1690.

succeeding Assemblies do not seem to have regarded this special power as conferred for any purpose beyond that which was specified. But the Assembly, in virtue of its own inherent powers, continued to appoint a commission to transact such business as might be fittingly disposed of by it. At first only a few members of Assembly were nominated for this duty; but by and by considerable jealousy seems to have been excited as to these nominations, and a desire became pronounced that the constitution of the court should be wider.

In 1724 much complaint was made against the proceedings of the commission, chiefly by men who thought they had been overlooked in not having been nominated as members of it.[1] A new principle of nomination was demanded. More than one was suggested and debated; some being rejected because of their questionable legality, others because of their unquestionable inexpediency. It was at last proposed that the commission should be composed of all the members of Assembly. This plan met with opposition also, and Wodrow says it was a proposal that was easily answered.[2] But the counter-reply seems to have been equally easy, for certainly since 1724 this is the way in which the appointment has been made. What are the precise powers of the commission is a question which has never been definitely settled. For about thirty-three years after this time it seems to have exercised a jurisdiction almost as great as the Assembly. It frequently suspended ministers, and as frequently deposed them altogether,[3] and it did so without challenge. During the lengthened period of the ascendency of the Moderate party the commission almost entirely ceased to exert these supreme functions.[4] The power of deposition was revived in a few instances during the Ten Years' Conflict,[5] and again in 1887.[6] The power of the commission to exercise such functions was seriously questioned by the President of the Court of Session in the Culsalmond case; but no legal decision has ever been given, the point not having been fairly before the court in the case referred to. But some eminent church lawyers of recent times have stated their opinion

[1] Cunningham's "Hist.," ii. 390. [2] "Correspondence," iii. 134, 135.
[3] Mair's "Digest of Church Laws:" Supplement, 1888. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid.,
[6] Proceedings of Assembly, 1888.

that the commission is not to be regarded as a court of the Church, and that it has no power to decide finally in judicial cases.[1] The Assembly of 1888 rescinded a sentence of the commission pronounced by the November commission of the previous year, deposing a minister from his office.[2] It did so on the ground that the commissioners' power to exercise such a function is at least doubtful, and that it is inexpedient to exercise it, even if it had the power. Practically, the commission has now almost sunk into abeyance. The Assembly itself can generally transact all the business which has to come before it without difficulty, and the numerous committees which have been created of late years lighten its labours to a considerable extent. It is only on rare occasions indeed that the commission meets, and even at such times it is but sparingly attended.

The Assembly of this year had also to deal with the first symptoms of the agrarian troubles which have shown themselves more or less prominently in after times, and which are a source of difficulty at the present day. Some of the proprietors in the south of Scotland had begun to inclose their land for purposes of cultivation—a process which had hitherto been almost unknown. In doing so they had to encroach upon the privileges of small holders who had occupied diminutive plots of ground, in which they had come to believe they had a vested right. Much discontent ensued upon their ejectment from their little possessions, which was, in fact, the precursor of the scenes enacted on a larger scale in the north and west in more recent times, with similar protests of hardship. The discontent grew into resistance, for the peasantry of those days knew of no other outlet for their energies than the cultivation of such little holdings, and they saw nothing but starvation before them. Riots took place in more than one locality, and the inclosures were forcibly cast down. The Presbytery of Kirkcudbright tried to deal with the matter. They issued a document and ordered it to be read from their pulpits, in which they rebuked both the rioters and the lairds who had given occasion to the disturbances by in-

[1] Hill's "View of the Constitution of the Church;" Dr. John Cook.
[2] Cross case, 1888.

closing their fields. The document was laid upon the table of the Assembly, probably by some of the proprietors or their friends, who foresaw how greatly the movement was likely to benefit the country at large, and who felt that the presbytery's strictures on the landowners had been somewhat harsh. The Assembly took the same view, and cautioned the presbytery to be prudent in their censures of agricultural changes, and to emphasize their disapprobation of lawlessness. It was a fitting deliverance at a critical time. A very slight expression of opinion, unfavourable to agricultural progress, on the part of a court whose influence in the rural districts was so great as was that of the Assembly, might have had the effect of materially retarding the progress of agricultural science. The sensible position taken up by the supreme court of the Church unquestionably helped to give it a healthy impetus.

It was at this time that a controversy arose in the Episcopal Church, resulting in its division into what came to be known as the Usagers and Non-usagers. There had always been a tendency among a section of the Scottish Episcopal clergy towards the practice of certain rites, which had originally been retained by the Church of England after its separation from Rome, but which had been abandoned as savouring of Romanism. So long as they retained their connection with the State no open attempt had been made to return to these practices. But now that they were entirely free of all responsibility to the civil power, some of the dispossessed Episcopalians began to revert to them, believing that they had been sanctioned by the earliest liturgies of the Christian Church. These "usages," as they were called, were—(1) Mixing water with the wine in the eucharist, in memory of the water and blood that had flowed from our Lord's pierced side;[1] (2) commemorating the faithful departed at the altar; (3) consecrating the elements with an invocation of the Holy Ghost; and (4) using a prayer of oblation in which the consecrated elements are solemnly offered to God as the body and blood of His Son.

[1] In some parts of the north of Scotland this practice still prevails, or did so till recently, among certain of the older ministers, in ignorance apparently of the custom of which it is a relic.

There was a party in the Scottish Episcopal Church, however, who were by no means disposed to agree to these customs. The Usagers felt that they must exert every effort to strengthen themselves if they were to have their own way. The Episcopate in Scotland was dying out, and it must be renewed. Campbell, a nephew of the covenanting Marquis of Argyll, had been consecrated a bishop after the Revolution. Having no flock to superintend, he resided chiefly in London. There he became acquainted with Dr. James Gadderar, who had been "rabbled" out of the parish of Kilmaurs. It was resolved to add Dr. Gadderar to the Scottish episcopate, and he was consecrated by Campbell, Falconer (another Scottish bishop), and Hickes, an English nonjuror. Exception was taken at the time to the validity of Gadderar's orders, inasmuch as none of the officiating bishops had, by the canon law, authority to perform the act of consecration in the diocese of another bishop without his consent, which, in this case, had not been obtained. Hickes, it was also said, had no Episcopal authority at all, as he had been himself consecrated by three nonjurors, who had previously been removed from their episcopal position.[1] The question is not of great importance to a Presbyterian, but it is of no small consequence to those who maintain the theory of apostolical succession if they are to stand up for the purity of that succession in the case of the Scots Episcopal clergy. Both Campbell and Gadderar sympathized with the nonjurors. They were also in full accord with the usages, and were anxious to see what they regarded as the ancient customs revived in Scotland. Accordingly, when Gadderar (in room of Campbell, who preferred to remain in London) was sent down to Aberdeen as bishop of the titular diocese, the clergy who had adopted the usages were emboldened, and began to practise them more openly than formerly. The opponents of these practices naturally became more decided in their opposition; and a serious difference sprang up in the already feeble ranks of the Scottish Episcopacy. It was not mended by a strange attempt at union with the Eastern Church. This had been actually proposed, some little time before this period, in consequence of a visit to this country

[1] Percival's "Apology for an Apostolical Succession," quoted by Cunningham, "Hist.," ii.

made by Arsenius, metropolitan of the Thebaid. Campbell had become acquainted with him, and had suggested the advisability of some such effort, which he appears to have readily adopted. Negotiations were set on foot all the more heartily, as it became known that the project was warmly sympathized in by the ecclesiastical authorities of Russia, and even by the Czar Peter himself. But it soon transpired that there was a hopeless divergence between the two Churches on such vital topics as the worship of the virgin, the invocation of saints, the veneration of relics, the "double procession," and the worship of the host in the eucharistic sacrifice. When the Scottish Episcopalians, with much display of scholarship and argumentation, attempted to defend their own views on these points, and to urge that they should be at least free, in event of union, to retain their opinions and practice, they were answered by the Eastern brethren, in a strain so lofty as to preclude all further parley, that these were subjects which had long ago received the attention of the orthodox, and that the Eastern Church could have no communion with those who even called them in question. The document containing this hopeless decision was subscribed by officials of such high-sounding names and titles as to make it evident that no renewal of the negotiations had a chance of success.[1] But the Usagers, who had suffered this humiliation, seem to have been resolved to assert their independence all the more determinedly, because of their rejection as brethren by the Eastern Church.

Up to this time the bishoprics in Scotland had been filled, when they became vacant, by the nominees of the Pretender. These persons were not appointed to any special dioceses. They were waiting to have their dioceses formally assigned to them when the royal exile should have his own again. The College of Bishops faithfully carried out their master's wishes, and consecrated whomsoever he named. But now the Usagers began to question the propriety of continuing to observe these nominations. They said that in ancient times the clergy and the people themselves chose their bishops, without the intervention of any royal mandate. Each bishop also had his own diocese, and was consecrated for it. The practice was a wholesome one and ought to

[1] Skinner's "Ecclesiastical History," ii. 634–639.

be resumed. King James was no longer the acting sovereign. It behoved them to make such arrangements now as should be most conducive to the good of the Church. A most unseemly controversy emerged upon this topic. The Pretender himself, and his secretary in this country, Lockhart of Carnwath, did their best to put a stop to it, but in vain. The two parties—viz. the College bishops, as the adherents to the Pretender's claims were called, and the Usager bishops, as the advocates of the new principles came to be called—endeavoured each to strengthen their own ranks by consecrating prelates who should adhere to their respective tactics. The Usagers met by themselves and added one to their number to make their party equal to that of their opponents. Then the College bishops consecrated two who held to their views. A week afterwards the Usagers again met and desecrated the solemn act of consecration by laying hands on two more, so that their majority in the supreme council of the Church should still be maintained. Ten days elapsed and the College bishops again met, and declared the last two bishops consecrated by the Usagers to have no title to the Episcopal office. It was an absurd and unseemly spectacle. At length the College party died out, and the Usagers gained the day. The old scheme, which had really become impracticable in the continued and final absence of the Pretender from the dominions he still continued to claim, fell into disuse, and afterwards every bishop consecrated in Scotland was appointed to one or more of the abolished sees.[1]

[1] Skinner's "Ecclesiastical History," ii. 644, 645.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FROM PROFESSOR SIMSON'S CASE, IN 1726, TO THE ASSEMBLY'S FINDING AS TO CALLS, IN 1732.

Professor Simson again—Accused of Arianism—Overtures to the Assembly—Sent down to the Presbytery of Glasgow—Procedure there—The case comes up again—Found relevant—And proven—Sent down to presbyteries to decide upon the sentence—Simson suspended *sine die*—Dissatisfaction—Wisdom of the sentence—Glas of Tealing—The Royal Infirmary—Death of Boston—Death of Wodrow—Stewart of Pardovan—Lord Grange—Patronage—The Call—Disputes as to who should issue it—Objections of the people—Recusancy of presbyteries—Riding committees.

ELEVEN years had elapsed since the case against Professor Simson of Glasgow had been disposed of by the Assembly. Every one had hoped that the last had then been heard of his alleged heretical teaching. But it was not so. Simson had formerly been accused of teaching Arminianism. Rumours now began to get abroad that he had gone even further astray than before, and was teaching Arianism. This was, of course, a very serious charge, for it implied that the professor had imbibed opinions utterly subversive of the generally received doctrine as to the nature and personality of the Redeemer. The heresy, both in its more pronounced and more modified form, denied the eternal existence of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and declared them to be in some sense creations of the Father. It had been condemned by the Council of Nice, although the subject was warmly contested for long afterwards by different sections of the Christian Church.

The discussion had been revived in England, about this time, by the publication of Dr. Samuel Clarke's great work upon "The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity." In this he argues that God the Father is the alone source of being; that the Son and the Holy Spirit, although existent along with Him from the beginning, are not necessarily existent, but derive their being from Him by an act of His Divine power and will. Christ was called God in the Scriptures, because of the nature and powers communicated to Him by the Father, not because He possessed them inherently. A reply to this treatise, which all admired

for its learning and ability, although many differed from its reasoning, was published by Dr. Waterland, who assailed the argument of Dr. Clarke with great power, and reasserted the unity in substance, as the Confession of Faith has it, of the three Divine Persons. Dr. Clarke was not slow to reply, and the controversy spread. As might be expected, it was not confined to the south of the Tweed, and it soon became a current rumour that Dr. Clarke had an adherent and an expositor in the Glasgow professor of divinity. So widely did this report prevail that the church courts could at last no longer overlook it, and in 1726 several presbyteries sent up overtures to the Assembly, asking that the professor's teaching might again be inquired into. The Assembly took up the case. They first of all inquired of the members from the Glasgow Presbytery what had been done in the matter by that court. It appeared that Simson had denied in writing the truth of th reports, and had stated in the same letter what he actually taught as to the doctrine of the Trinity. This letter had been remitted to a committee for examination, and they had not yet reported upon it. The Assembly now remitted the case to the Presbytery of Glasgow with instructions to examine the letter, and to take all necessary and legal steps to discover whether Mr. Simson's teaching was in accord with the standards of the Church. They also appointed a large and highly influential committee to correspond with the Presbytery of Glasgow, and to assist them in their investigations.[1]

When the presbytery and the committee began their work, Simson declined to subject himself to their interrogation. It is indeed difficult to conceive how such a process could have been seriously thought of, since no man can be compelled to criminate himself. He objected also to have his opinions judged of by the statements in the letter, which had not been written in view of the serious consequences which had now ensued. It was then proposed to examine Mr. Simson's students. But the young men, who were perhaps, not unnaturally, loyal to their professor, disliked being brought forward as evidence against him. They declared that they could not remember the exact words he used, which is not surprising, especially as the lectures

[1] Acts of Assembly, 1726.

were delivered in Latin. Wodrow declares that most of the students were raw lads, who really did not understand what Mr. Simson taught.[1] Some of the students were, however, examined, and some of their statements seemed to substantiate the truth of the rumours. Upon this Mr. Simson gave in a formal document in which he stated that latterly he had seen the necessity of departing from all theories of the explanation of the doctrine of the Trinity, and confining himself strictly in speaking of it to the expressions used in the Scripture and in the standards of the Church. He also expressed much surprise that he should be charged with denying the necessary existence of the Son, as he had always taught that He had all life in Himself, and that He was infinite and eternal in His being and all His attributes. Notwithstanding this strong statement the presbytery proceeded against Simson by libel. The process was exceedingly difficult. The students, who were the principal witnesses, were required to swear to the professor's very words. Often they could not do so; often also their evidence crumbled away under close cross-examination.

When the case came to be reported to the Assembly in 1727 the excitement throughout the country was very great. The Marrow men and their supporters, remembering how they had been dealt with a few years before, speculated greatly as to what might be the result of proceedings against a heresy so flagrant as was attributed to Simson. The moderator made it the subject of his opening sermon, and it had an influence upon the choice of his successor.[2] When the libel was read, and the Assembly were going to consider its relevancy, Professor Simson asked to be heard, and declared that he held no opinions that were not contained in the Confession of Faith; that he was very unwell when he delivered one of the discourses referred to in the libel, and that if any of the expressions made use of in that discourse were contrary to the standards, he retracted them.[3] The debate was conducted with much ability. It is one of the few discussions on points of doctrine which have taken place in the Assembly. M'Laurin of Glasgow, the author of a celebrated sermon on "Glorying in the Cross," argued that the charge, if proved, inferred censure—*i.e.* that the neces-

[1] "Correspondence," iii. [2] Cunningham's "History," ii. 402. [3] Ibid. 403.

sary existence of the Son is a doctrine of the Church of Scotland. He was answered, chiefly on technical grounds, by Dundas of Arniston, one of the greatest lawyers of his day. The libel, however, with slight alteration, was held relevant. When the question of proof came to be considered, the same speakers were again heard. The most of the ministers who had previously addressed the house held that the heresy was proven. Dundas, however, again exerted himself, and brought all his legal power and learning to bear on behalf of Simson. He spoke of the long time which had elapsed since the words complained of were spoken, and the youth of some of the witnesses; he showed that they had contradicted themselves, and ascribed false Latin to the professor. The great advocate's eloquence was in vain; for the Assembly, by a large majority, found this article proven. The other articles were dealt with in a similar manner, and Professor Simson then came to the bar, and stated what, he declared, were his real sentiments on the contested points, in so orthodox a fashion that the most fastidious would have been satisfied, if they had been sure that he was sincere.

So much time had now been spent that it was evidently impossible the case could be concluded by this Assembly. Other matters also seemed to be involved in the case so far as it had gone, which it might be necessary to deal with. So it was remitted back to the presbytery and the committee to proceed further with it, and to have it ready for judgment the following year. In the meantime Simson was suspended from the exercise of his functions. Again the presbytery addressed themselves to the task. They found the articles of the libel which had not been disposed of both relevant and proven. They found also that the professor had not fully obeyed the injunctions of the Assembly in the former case against him, and they libelled him anew upon that charge.

The excitement at the Assembly of 1728 was even greater than it had been the previous year. A decision must now be given, it was thought, and the great case brought to an end. All the arguments about the necessary existence of the Son were repeated. It must have seemed as if the Fathers of the primitive church were members of Assembly, and that some of the great passages at arms in the Council of Nice were being

rehearsed. The terms *homoousian, hypostasis, substance, essence* were discoursed upon, expounded, and expounded again. All the metaphysical distinctions common in such abstruse arguments were freely made use of, both in the house and at the bar. It was attempted to be shown that Simson's error was nothing more than an incautious phraseology; but this was met by a quotation from the words of Cromwell at the trial of Archbishop Laud—"If the archbishop thinks as we do, why does he not speak as we do?" Finally, the Assembly resolved that although the pleas adduced on behalf of the professor in some degree extenuated his fault, they did not by any means exculpate him altogether.

The examination of Mr. Simson's written papers was proceeded with, and argued upon in a similar manner. Several prominent and able debaters maintained that the terms he had made use of were ambiguous, and were often employed in the same way by orthodox writers whose works they quoted. Others, again, maintained that they admitted but of one interpretation, and that their having been adopted by Mr. Simson went far to substantiate the charge against him. Again the much-questioned professor was interrogated at the bar on an abstruse and metaphysical point as to the necessary existence of the Son. Once more he read a paper to the Assembly, in which he declared as plainly as words on so mystical a subject could express it, that he held to the doctrine of the standards of the Church; that he believed in the independent and necessary existence of the Son equally as of the Father; and the dogma of the three persons in the Godhead, and their numerical unity.

The question now finally arose as to what should be the censure upon the erring professor. His counsel pleaded that whatever heresy he may have uttered he had retracted, and that no censure at all should follow in such a case. Some of the Assembly thought so too, and would have dismissed the accused from the bar. But the majority were of another mind. They held, and with some reason, that although Professor Simson had now retracted his false opinions, he had not scrupled to propagate them, and to do so in his position as a teacher of the youthful ministers of the Church, where he had been the means of doing much permanent injury. It was not

seemly that his past transgressions should go unpunished, even although he now thought fit to abjure his errors. Moreover, it was not to be forgotten that Simson had been at the bar before; that he had not taken duly to heart the solemn warning he had then received; and therefore there was no certainty, if he should now be absolved, that he would not ere long be found promulgating equally erroneous and dangerous views. The Assembly was divided as to the course to be pursued. Some advocated excommunication; others, deposition; others still, suspension. Feeling ran high in the court, not allayed, we can well suppose, by the temper of the Marrow men and their supporters. A breach in the Church seemed imminent, and in order to avoid so disastrous a result, the somewhat extraordinary course was adopted of delaying a final sentence till next General Assembly, and in the meantime having the process printed and sent down to presbyteries, in order that they might send up their opinions upon it. If this procedure was competent, which may well be doubted, it certainly did not tend to smooth matters. The discussion was transferred from the floor of the Assembly to every presbytery in the Church. Some pitied Simson, and excused him on account of the subtlety of the questions, and from the fact that he had renounced whatever errors he may have held. They remembered also that he was now well advanced in years and in feeble health. But the general tone of the discussions in the presbyteries was by no means so lenient. Simson, indeed, seems to have alienated friendship by his overbearing manner, and an ill-disguised contempt for the powers and the erudition of his brethren in the ministry. Probably they were not displeased to have the opportunity of expressing, in return, the opinion they had formed of him. Certainly they spoke in no measured terms of the dangerous tendency of the professor's teaching, and of the underhand manner in which he had recanted, as they alleged, at the last moment, to save himself from consequences. When the Assembly met in 1729 it was found, on examining the returns from presbyteries, that only a very few desired that he should be retained in his office.

Discussion arose anew as to what should be the sentence. Many demanded deposition; but it was finally resolved to sus-

pend Simson from the exercise of his functions until another Assembly should see fit to remove the suspension. It was the most fitting sentence that could well be pronounced. The old man was saved from being cast penniless upon the world, and the students of the Church were saved from the dangers of heretical teaching. But the sentence did not give universal satisfaction. We shall see very shortly how it was referred to as a sad case of the Church's defection, and as a reason why those who departed from her justified their separation. Even in the Assembly it was not acquiesced in unanimously. When the deliverance was finally agreed upon, Thomas Boston of Ettrick rose and declared that he felt called upon to dissent from the finding as altogether inadequate to the offence given. "I cannot help thinking," he continued, "that the cause of Jesus Christ, as to the great and essential point of his Supreme Deity, has been at the bar of this Assembly requiring justice; and as I am shortly to answer at His bar for all I do or say, I dare not give my assent to the decision of this act, and therefore in my own name, and in the name of all who shall adhere to me, and if none will, for myself alone, I crave leave to enter my protest against the decision."[1]

So ended this memorable case, one of the very few in the history of the Church in which the courts have had to deal with doctrinal difficulty. But Boston's protest has found sympathizers in our own times. It has been asserted that the leniency of this sentence was another instance of the growing unfaithfulness of the Church, and a result of the baneful influence of the Episcopal element which had been tolerated after the Revolution.[2] It is difficult to conceive how this view can be maintained. Now that the heat and bitterness of the controversy have long passed away, and we can look back upon it in the unprejudiced calm which has gathered over it in the course of a century and a half, it is impossible not to be grateful that our fathers were guided as they were. No one can say that they showed any disposition to condone error in doctrine. On the contrary, the long and patient efforts which they made to expiscate the truth, and the ability of their dis-

[1] Boston's "Memoirs," 354.
[2] Hetherington's "History of the Church of Scotland," 636.

cussions regarding the abstruse points submitted to them, are evidence alike of their earnestness and of their power to cope with the profoundest questions that can exercise the human intellect. They cannot be accused of shielding error in doctrine, for they condemned unhesitatingly the heretical views. Neither were they careless of the future of the Church, and of the character of the teaching her young ministers were to receive, for they removed the accused professor from his office notwithstanding his assurances that he held to the standards. The whole question of the Church's faithfulness or unfaithfulness must turn upon the penalty inflicted. Boston and his later sympathizers denounce the action of the Assembly because they did not depose or excommunicate the unfortunate heretic; or in other words, because while they condemned his errors, and removed him from his office, they shrank from depriving him in his old age of his daily bread. An unbiased judgment will warmly approve of the wisdom of the court which enabled an old man who had been so long engaged in the service of the Church, and who had done what he could to atone for a fault, to pass the remainder of his days in comfort, while the young men for whom they were bound to care were removed from his questionable influence. It was, indeed, an instance of the exercise of that sober moderation which has in certain quarters been so unjustly vilified, but which has always been the means of preserving in the Church the higher principles of Christian statesmanship, and of commending her spiritual economy to the more sagacious and enlightened of her children.[1]

The same Assembly which dealt finally with Professor Simson had also under consideration the case of Mr. John Glas, minister of Tealing. It is worthy of notice, as being the earliest instance of the assertion of the principles of Voluntaryism in recent times in Scotland. Glas seems from the first to have held peculiar notions on various ecclesiastical matters. He began by a vigorous assault on the Covenants, which were still highly

[1] The reader who is anxious to look more minutely into the particulars of this most interesting case, would do well to consult Wodrow's "Correspondence." A large part of the third volume is occupied with it, and he speaks from personal knowledge. He was a member of the special committee referred to in the text, and he was present at the three Assemblies when the case came up. Principal Cunningham has given an admirable summary of the doctrinal discussion in the second volume of his History (400–414). It is also dealt with in our dissertation on the Doctrine of the Church.

esteemed by many Scottish churchmen. Some little time afterwards he published his discourse against civil establishments of religion. This is an able treatise, and the arguments have been reproduced by the most eminent advocates of the Voluntary system. The church courts treated Glas with much forbearance, although he bore himself towards them in a high-handed and somewhat contemptuous manner. He was deposed in 1729, chiefly for contumacy. Subsequently he declared himself an Independent in his views of church government, and in his congregation in Dundee, and afterwards in Perth, he introduced various practices which he considered to be in accordance with those of the primitive Church; such as love feasts, abstinence from blood and from things strangled, the holy kiss, the washing of one another's feet, and lay preaching. The sect which he formed still exists under the name of Glassites, which it bears in Scotland, and of Sandemanians, after his son-in-law, Robert Sandeman, in England. It has never had a large membership, however, and holds but a feeble position among the many sects into which Scottish religion is unhappily divided.

Before passing on to the critical period which must immediately occupy us, it may be noted here that it was at this time that the noble institution known as the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh took its rise. The Royal College of Physicians had found difficulty in dealing with serious cases of disease amongst the poor, from the absence of such appliances as were necessary to their successful treatment. They accordingly originated the movement which led to the erection of the well-known infirmary. In doing so they appropriately called in the aid of the Church, and amid the subtle discussions which have just been recorded, it is pleasing to note that the assembled divines took up the project warmly, and both then and on after occasions recommended collections to be made for it throughout the bounds. The building thus founded by the munificence of private charity and by the help of the Church's contributions, remained for a century and a half the centre of the most beneficent work that even Edinburgh, the city of charities, can boast. It has been replaced only a few years ago by the splendid pile of buildings overlooking the Meadows, where the benevolence of our own time, not less than that of

the days of which we write, is supplemented and aided by the newest appliances in the healing art which modern science has discovered.

It may be also noted that the death of two of the most famous Scottish churchmen of their day occurred during the period on which we are about to enter. The first was Thomas Boston, the minister of Ettrick, author of the celebrated work entitled "The Fourfold State," one of the most widely circulated and justly appreciated of the religious books of last century. Ettrick has been highly privileged in the character of the religious literature which has issued from its classic precincts. The "Fourfold State" was of itself sufficient to endear the locality to the inquiring Christian; and but recently there has issued from the same quiet manse a volume of Bible readings by the wife of the minister who held the living a few years ago, which for depth and tenderness of spiritual insight is no unworthy companion to the celebrated work of last century.[1] Boston's connection with the "Marrow" controversy subjected him, according to his own conviction, to a species of persecution under which he chafed. He lived and died minister of the remote rural parish where he wrote his notable treatise. He was frequently asked to remove to more prominent spheres, but his translation was always opposed, as he himself believed, lest he should have wider opportunity of propagating his views of the truth. He concludes his "Memoirs" with the following pathetic exclamation: "Man is born crying, lives lamenting, and dies with a groan. This world has been a step-mother to me. I have waited for thy salvation, O my God."[2] He died in 1732.

Shortly afterwards the Church was deprived of Robert Wodrow, the historian of the "Sufferings of the Church," the author also of the "Analecta," and of the "Correspondence" which throws so much light upon those times. His father was professor of divinity in Glasgow. He was himself librarian to the university while he was pursuing his college course. He was appointed minister of Eastwood shortly after his license, at that time a quiet rural parish, but having many attractions to a man of Wodrow's leanings, especially from its vicinity to the

[1] "Bible Hours," by the late Mary Duncan. [2] Boston's "Memoirs," 354.

library of the university. His "History of the Sufferings of the Church," published about seven years after his appointment to Eastwood, is an ill-digested, and in many respects a crude performance; but it contains a mass of fact which is all the more striking from the simplicity with which it is told, and which, although often questioned and gainsaid, has never been to any extent invalidated. His "Correspondence" is the most valuable of his remains. It consists of copies of most of the letters he wrote to his numerous correspondents, and the original letters which were addressed to him by them, which he seems invariably to have retained. Many of his letters are written to his wife from the General Assembly, of whose proceedings he gives a gossipy but often racy account, generally on the evening of the day on which they occurred. They supply the place of the modern newspaper report; but they contain a much more vivid picture of the men and their sayings and doings than the proprieties of journalism would tolerate now-a-days. He was a devoted churchman, deeply concerned in the important questions of the day—in some things ahead of his time, in others behind it. He was imbued with the true evangelical spirit, and anxious above all things for its progress. He died at the comparatively early age of fifty-five, but not before he had done such service to the Church as shall never be forgotten. He lies in the old churchyard of Eastwood, and a somewhat ornate tombstone, recently restored by his descendant, Mr. Charles Wodrow Thomson of Edinburgh, marks his resting-place.

Near Wodrow's grave was buried another of the benefactors of the Church of Scotland, who died a few years before him, Walter Stewart of Pardovan, the author of a collection of church laws and forms, which was for many years the only book of the sort extant, and which, although long ago superseded in some particulars by more modern works, is still to be regarded as an authority on many topics. His property of Pardovan, which gave the name to his book, by which it is so widely known as "Pardovan's Collection," lies in the parish of Linlithgow, close to the old mansion house of Binns, owned a generation earlier by the notorious Dalziel, the co-adjutor of Claverhouse in his persecutions of the Covenanters. Stewart was a shrewd church

lawyer. He was also a liberal contributor to the charities of the Church. His bequests are enjoyed to this day by the poor of Linlithgow, where he spent the most of his life.

A very different character may also claim a passing notice, in the person of Lord Grange, one of the judges of the Court of Session, an elder of the Church, and for many years a prominent member of the General Assembly, one of those who warmly advocated the interrogation of Professor Simson as to what were his actual beliefs. He was for long regarded by his contemporaries in Scotland as a man of the highest and most saintly character. The prime minister of the day, Sir Robert Walpole, who was not easily deceived or hoodwinked, seems to have entertained his own suspicions of him, but in his native country no one doubted his integrity; and his opinion on all matters of church polity and practice was eagerly sought and deferentially listened to. Yet it transpired, in the sequel, that he had been acting a part of the deepest treachery all through the years of his connection with the Church; that he was in close correspondence with the Jacobites of the day; and that he was as frequently to be found in the conclaves of traitors, and in the haunts of dissipation and criminality in London, as in his seat on the bench of the Court of Session, or in the debates and committee rooms of the General Assembly. The weird story of his treatment of his wife is one of those tragedies which could only take place during the days when civilization was only partially known in the country. He had given out that she had an unhappy temper, and that his life was rendered miserable by her undutiful conduct. In 1732 it was announced that she had died, and her funeral was conducted with a pomp befitting the wife of a man in Lord Grange's prominent position. It was not till ten years afterwards that it became known that the funeral had been a mock burial, and the story of her death a fabrication. It was supposed that she had secrets to tell about treasonable doings which neither Grange nor his friends could wish divulged. She was seized, in her own house of Grange, at her husband's desire, by a party of Highlanders, and conveyed from one place to another until, at last, she was carried to St. Kilda, at that time as inaccessible as though it had been in the South Seas. The story of her death

and the farce of her burial was a ruse to allay suspicion and to prevent inquiry.[1] It is strange to find that this unprincipled man kept a diary, which has been published, in which he records his spiritual self-communings with the devotion and the humility of a saint.

But subjects of paramount import in the history of the Church now force themselves upon our notice. In order that our readers may intelligently grasp the significance of the events about to be recorded, it will be necessary to recall the state of the patronage question at the period at which we have arrived. When the Act of 1712, restoring patronage, was passed, it created, as we saw, much dissatisfaction in the Church and throughout the country. For a long time it was practically useless. The patrons had regained their old rights of presentation, but the popular feeling against the measure was so strong that they shrank from exercising their right, and seldom issued a presentation to a vacant charge. Sometimes they recommended a person to fill the vacancy.[2] Oftener they made no difficulty when the presbytery settled a minister upon the call of the people. When a presentation was issued, it was frequently set aside upon some such representation as that the presentee was not duly qualified, or was not a fit person for the parish: and as the patrons were in many cases Jacobites and Episcopalians who had no interest in the Church, their presentations were often issued (when issued at all) in favour of persons to whom such objections could easily be taken. But some of these Jacobite patrons did what was even worse than the issue of presentations to unsuitable persons. They were entitled by the law, as it then stood, to draw the stipend of a parish during a vacancy. They had therefore a pecuniary interest in prolonging vacancies as far as possible. In order to do this, and thus enjoy the fruits of the benefice, unscrupulous patrons were in the habit of issuing presentations to persons who were certain not to accept of them. They had six months in which they might make the presentation, but by adopting this course they gained six months more, and they might repeat the process as often as they pleased, and practically retain the benefice in their own hands. The abuse at last became so great that

[1] Hill Burton's "Hist.," ii. 304–310. [2] Cunningham's "Hist.," ii. 418.

the Church made representations to Government on the subject. A remedy was promised, and in 1719 a clause was inserted in an Act passed for modifying the abjuration oath, by which it was provided that unless the person in whose favour a presentation was issued by the patron within six months of the occurrence of the vacancy accepted the presentation, the six months' term during which the patron had the right to present should be held not to have been interrupted, and at its close the right should fall to the presbytery, *tanquam jure devoluto.*

When this amendment on the Patronage Act was obtained, it was thought by some that it might check what was regarded as the evil of patronage altogether. Since the power of presenting to vacant parishes now fell to the presbytery in six months, unless a presentation had been both issued and accepted within that time, the Church could very easily retain the power of filling up vacancies in its own hands. It had only to prohibit its ministers and licentiates from ever accepting a presentation from a patron on pain of spiritual censures, and in six months the patron's right was gone. It is quite evident that this course was actually contemplated by a party in the Church. In 1724 it was referred to the commission to report as to what should be done in the case of ministers and probationers who showed a willingness to accept of presentations from patrons. Nothing was done in the matter, however; and in 1732 a petition was presented to the General Assembly, praying that as the amendment in the Patronage Act was like to be totally defeated by ministers and probationers accepting presentations from patrons without a call from the people, and as the church judicatories, which testified their displeasure against such offensive conduct, instead of being supported (as might have been expected), were condemned by the commission of Assembly, the Assembly itself should interpose in such a way as to give an effectual check to such dangerous practices, and enact that none be licensed or ordained who favour this cause.[1] It does not appear that this petition produced any marked effect, but while the acceptance of a presentation from a patron was for long very rare, there were instances in which licentiates were degraded, at least for a time, because of their having accepted

[1] Struthers' "History," i. 603.

them.[1] Clearly the tendency was to endeavour to neutralize the effect of the Patronage Act, by discouraging the patrons from the exercise of their legitimate rights. But the effect of this policy was the reverse of satisfactory. It was an underhand attempt to evade the operation of a measure which, however ill-judged and obnoxious to the general feeling, was nevertheless the law of the land.

There were two courses open to those who were dissatisfied with the restoration of patronage by the Act of 1712, either of which would have been legitimate and commendable. They might, if they thought fit, have separated from the Church altogether, and declined to be in any way responsible for the work of the Church under circumstances which they might justly have represented to be a violation both of the Revolution settlement and of the Act of Union. Or they might have retained their position in the Church under protest, and attempted to carry on its work, honestly recognizing the law of patronage, and endeavouring to discharge their duties under its influence, while they used every effort to secure its abolition and a return to the former mode of electing ministers, or the introduction of some other mode still more satisfactory. It was this last alternative which, as we shall shortly see, the Moderate party, when they were fairly organized, did their best to carry out, although they did so under all the disadvantage of having to break in upon the weak indecision which, while it chafed at the law, had not the energy to take effectual means to accomplish its removal from the statute book, and of having to oppose the popular prejudice, which had in this way been educated to believe that it was righteous and just to evade an obnoxious law, if that law impinged upon things sacred.

It is a mistake to say that the troubles, which have so largely afflicted the Church of Scotland, are to be ascribed solely to the existence of patronage. It may be said, with much reason, that so long as those only who hold the Church's orders can be inducted to vacant parishes, the Church herself has the key of the position. Some will assert that a patron of education and influence, who has the interests of his people at heart, and who is honestly anxious to make the best appoint-

[1] Report of Patronage Committee to the House of Commons, Dr. R. Burns' evidence.

ment he can, is more likely to be able to discover the capabilities of a possible presentee, than a large congregation, who have but few means of gaining trustworthy knowledge, and must confide in the investigations of a committee. But, however the appointment is made, it can be made only from among those whom the Church has herself declared to be fit to occupy her pulpits. It must be her own fault, therefore, if she sends out any one holding her credentials, whom either a patron or a congregation may not safely select to be the minister of a parish. Had this always been recognized, and unworthy men been scrupulously prevented from ever getting into the ministry of the Church, patronage could have been but a slight evil, if it had not been a positive benefit. Unfortunately the Church did not realize this view of the matter so vividly as she ought to have done. Both in the last century and in the present, she greatly overlooked it, and contented herself with mere evasive measures in order to cope with a system which she still declared to be an evil—a fatal expediency which, alike in the earlier times of which we are writing and in later days, has reaped its own reward.

The document upon which the presbyteries felt themselves really warranted to proceed in a vacancy, at this time, was named "The Call." It was a formal declaration on the part of the congregation that they desired the person named to be their minister, and a promise to give him all due honour and respect. The practice of giving the call dated from the year 1649,[1] shortly after the great ecclesiastical revolution by which Episcopacy was for the time overthrown; and the practice had been ratified by the Act 1690. It was held that the evidence of concurrence on the part of the parishioners to the proposed settlement, contained in the document, was essential to an induction. This theory was afterwards questioned, as we shall have occasion to notice, and the absence of objection held to be all that was required. But at the time with which we are dealing it was regarded as indispensable. After the passing of the Patronage Act, and while the patrons were chary as to presenting, settlements frequently took place upon the call alone, without a formal presentation from the patron. Sometimes the presentation was disregarded, and a person was inducted who

[1] Cunningham's "Hist.," ii. 422.

had the call from the people. This happened in the case of Twynholm in 1726.[1] Such irregularity was certain to lead to collision in some shape sooner or later. But about this time disputes began to arise as to what constituted a call. Everyone agreed that there must be a call of some sort; but it came to be questioned whether a call from the heritors and elders were sufficient, or whether it ought to proceed from the heads of families in the parish, also. It seems tolerably clear to a dispassionate mind that if the call is really of any force, and if the principle it implies is to be carried out—viz. that it is an invitation from a parish to a man to be their minister—it must be given, not by any one section of the people, however influential, but by the people in a body. It was one of the mischievous results, however, of the attempt to evade the law of patronage rather than to submit to it and agitate for its recall, that the uncertain substitute for the constitutional procedure led to this divergence of opinion, and finally to disaster.

With a case of a disputed settlement at Aberdeen, in 1726, the difficulties of the position of the Church, in its relation to patronage and the call, may be said to have become gravely embarrassing. The people protested against patronage, but the patrons gradually became more disposed to assert their rights The call was regarded both by the people and by the church courts as an essential preliminary to induction. But the question began now to be seriously debated as to whether the call must necessarily be from the heads of families in the parish, or whether it ought to be held sufficient if it should emanate from the heritors and the office-bearers. As this dispute waxed in the church courts, the discontent among the people grew in proportion, when their voice as a whole was not heard. Often when there was only a presentation with a call from heritors and elders, or a call from the heritors and elders without a presentation from a patron, the people refused to receive the person so nominated. When the matter came before the church courts, as it often did, and the Synod or Assembly found in favour of an unacceptable nominee, the presbytery declined to obey the orders of the superior court, and refused to induct. In a short time this practice became so common that the

[1] Cunningham's "Hist.," ii. 422.

Assembly had to devise some means of meeting the difficulty. They did not care to compel a presbytery to do what they conscientiously objected to do, so they fell upon the expedient of appointing a committee of their own number to perform the duty which the presbytery declined. These committees became known as the "riding committees," either from their locomotive functions, or because of their duty, which was to override the decisions of majorities. Unseemly scenes were often witnessed at the settlements effected in this manner, and instead of allaying the growing feeling of dissatisfaction, they irritated and chafed the already excited passions, until it became evident that a dangerous outburst might take place at any moment.

CHAPTER XXV.

FROM THE "ACT ON CALLS" (1732) TO THE DEPOSITION OF THE SECEDERS (1740).

Overture on "Calls"—The Act passed—Ebenezer Erskine—His Synod sermon—Assembly of 1733—Kinross case—Ralph Erskine and the Presbytery of Dunfermline rebuked—Ebenezer Erskine and his friends rebuked—They protest—Are suspended—Disregard the suspension—Declared no longer ministers of the Church of Scotland—They protest—Constitute themselves the "Associate Presbytery"—Characteristics of Moderatism—True origin of the schism—Petitions in favour of the ejected ministers—Assembly of 1734—Act anent Calls rescinded—Synod of Perth empowered to restore Erskine and his friends—Deputation to London on abolition of patronage—Erskine refuses to return—"Judicial Testimony" of the seceders—Professor Campbell—Porteous mob—Deposition of the seceding ministers.

THE evils noticed in the close of the last chapter were now occupying the gravest attention of the more thoughtful and earnest in the Church. Every one felt that matters could not be allowed to remain as they were. Something must be done if the Church was to maintain its influence and its usefulness. Settlements by the presbytery, in consequence of the six months during which a patron had the right to issue a presentation having expired, were very frequent. It was thought that some step might be taken to regulate these settlements in the first instance, so as to secure more satisfactory results. Accordingly, in 1731, an overture was laid before the Assembly proposing that, whenever the filling up of a vacant parish lay with the presbytery, the appointment should be made upon a call from the heritors, being Protestants, and the elders. The person so called was to be proposed to the whole congregation, who should then have the right of approving or disapproving of the nomination. If any of the congregation thought fit to disapprove, they were to give their reasons for so doing, which were to be judged of by the presbytery; and the person nominated was either to be inducted or rejected, according as the reasons should be good or bad.[1] The proposal seemed eminently fair. It was in fact a return to the system which prevailed between the Revolution and the passing of the Patronage Act in 1712. The power unquestionably lay

[1] Acts of Assembly, iv., 1731.

with the people of rejecting an unsuitable nominee, provided they gave proper reasons for their disapproval of him, while at the same time it was provided that no mere causeless prejudice should be allowed to prevail. In conformity with the Barrier Act, this proposal was sent down to presbyteries in order that they might report their opinion upon it. In the meantime it was passed into an interim Act, and presbyteries were desired to proceed according to its provisions in filling up any vacancies which they might have occasion to supply, until the next General Assembly. This was, and still is, a common mode of dealing in regard to overtures sent down to presbyteries in this manner; but it was especially desirable that the practice should be observed in this instance, as the different presbyteries were following different methods in filling vacancies.[1]

The Assembly met in 1732, and called for the returns from presbyteries upon the overture. It will be remembered that in terms of the Barrier Act a measure of this kind cannot finally become law, unless a majority of presbyteries are in favour of it. There is some doubt as to how many presbyteries approved of the proposal; but there is reason to believe that eighteen were in favour of it, twelve in favour of it with some alterations; and that thirty-one were against it, while eighteen made no return at all.[2] Upon this one party argued that, adding the eighteen presbyteries who made no return to the thirty who were in favour of the overture either as it stood or with alterations, there were forty-eight in favour, while only thirty were against its proposal. They said that it was quite fair to reckon the eighteen presbyteries who made no return as favourable, because it had been specified when the overture was sent down that all presbyteries making no returns would be so regarded. The other party in the Assembly argued, on the other hand, that as there were only eighteen presbyteries in favour of the overture and thirty-one against it, it must be held that the majority was hostile; and that those which approved of it with alterations, and those which sent no returns, ought not to be taken into account.

The Church had been by this time, to a considerable extent, broken up into two sections by the cases of the "Mar-

[1] Acts of Assembly, iv. 1731, preamble. [2] Cunningham's "Church Hist.," ii. 425.

row" and of Professor Simson. Those who had supported the doctrines of the "Marrow," and had advocated the harsher measures against Simson, were being drawn together by that insensible attraction which gradually leads those who so sympathize to consult together and to act together in other matters, and in this way to form the basis of a party. Community of sentiment in one or two affairs of difficulty naturally leads to its continuance; and so it may be said that the events of the last few years had organized the two great parties which were for so long to dispute the government of the Church. But as yet they do not seem to have voted, as they came afterwards to do, according to party feeling. Many of those who, a few years afterwards, were attached either to the Moderate or the Evangelical side, and voted religiously with their leaders, were not yet so rigorously fettered. Men of both parties agreed in a desire to see a measure passed, by which the evils of the uncertain procedure which prevailed might be mitigated. They also held, very naturally, that the silent presbyteries ought fairly to be taken into account, and that the overture had therefore passed the Barrier Act, and ought now to become law. It was passed accordingly. But it did not pass without protest.

The minister of Stirling, Ebenezer Erskine, was a member of the Assembly of 1732, and as he shared in the opinion that all the communicants, perhaps even all the heads of families in a parish, should be permitted to join in taking the initiative in electing their minister, he denounced the proposed new law from his place in the house in no measured terms. "What difference," he said, "does a piece of land make between man and man in the affairs of Christ's kingdom, which is not of this world? Are we not commanded in the Word to do nothing by partiality? whereas here is the most manifest partiality in the world. We must have 'the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ' or the privilege of His Church 'without respect of persons;' whereas by this Act we show respect to the man with the gold ring and the gay clothing beyond the man with the vile raiment and the poor attire. We are told that 'God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith.' It is not said that He hath chosen the heritors of this world, as we have done; but that He 'hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith,

and heirs of the kingdom.' And if they be heirs of the kingdom, I wish to know by what warrant they are stripped of the privileges of the kingdom."[1]

This was not the first time that Erskine had asserted himself. He was one of the "Marrow men," and had taken a prominent part in the "Marrow" controversy. He was born at Dryburgh in 1680, of a family connected with the noble house of Mar. A memorial stone, inscribed with the names of himself and his scarcely less famous brother Ralph, stands at this day within the ruins of the ancient abbey. At the age of twenty-three he was settled in Portmoak, a beautiful rural parish in Kinrossshire, on the banks of Lochleven. Here he remained for twenty-eight years, ministering to the rustic congregation amongst which his lot was cast. At first, it is said, he preached a confused jumble of the Law and the Gospel. He had a faithless memory and an awkward delivery; and as in these days the aid of manuscript, or even of notes, was not to be thought of in the pulpit, the young minister used to fix his eye upon a particular stone in the wall opposite to him, never removing it until he had finished his discourse, lest any distraction should hopelessly interfere with the flow of his thoughts and words. As his views became more matured, however, and his knowledge of the nature and the value of the Gospel grew more extended, he threw off the frigid stiffness of his earlier days, and preached the Gospel with a richness of unction and a bold freedom of manner and style, which won for him a foremost place amongst the ministers of the Church. At that time the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was seldom celebrated more than once a year in the country parishes of Scotland; and in order to compensate for the infrequency of their opportunities of participating in the rite, the people of the neighbouring parishes used to crowd to the scene of celebration. The parishes of the most popular ministers were naturally the most largely frequented on such occasions; and although Portmoak was but a sparsely populated parish, there were generally no fewer than 2000 people in attendance at the sacramental gatherings.[2] Erskine was transferred to Stirling in 1731, and it was from this more prominent sphere that he made himself so famous as the leader of the secession.

[1] Thomson's "History of the Secession Church," 37. [2] Ibid.

On the first Sunday after the Act anent Calls was passed by the Assembly, Erskine denounced it from his pulpit in Stirling. It was the practice in those times to dwell frequently upon public affairs in the course of preaching. Erskine broadly asserted the Divine right of congregations to elect their own pastors; and declared that those "professed Presbyterians who thrust men upon congregations without the free choice their great King had allowed them, were guilty of an attempt to jostle Christ out of His government and to take it on their own shoulders." The sermon was published, and in the preface was directly applied to the Act anent Calls.[1] But Erskine was not satisfied with this pulpit protest. He had been appointed moderator of the Synod of Perth and Stirling at the spring meeting, and it was his duty to preach the customary sermon at the opening of that court in autumn. In the old Church of St. John in Perth the synod met. The preacher gave out as his text the words from Psalm cxviii., "The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner." After duly opening up the subject in the usual manner, he proceeded to apply the general principles of the passage to the vexed subject. He said that there is a twofold call necessary before a man can become a builder in the Church of God—the call of God and the call of His Church. After showing in what the call of God consists, he proceeded to say that the call of the Church lies in the free choice and election of the Christian people. The promise of conduct and counsel in the choice of men that are to build is not made to patrons, or heritors, or any other set of men, but to the Church, the body of Christ, to which apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are given. What a miserable bondage would it be reckoned for any family to have stewards or servants imposed upon them by strangers, who might give the children a stone for bread or a scorpion instead of a fish, poison instead of medicine. And shall we suppose that God ever granted a power to any set of men, patrons, heritors, or whoever they be—a power to impose servants on His family without His consent, they being the freest society in the world. As he approached the close of his discourse he became still more energetic in his declamation.

[1] Moncrieff's "Life of Dr. John Erskine," Appendix.

"A cry is gone up to heaven," he said, "against the builders, by the spouse of Christ, like that of Cant. v. 7, 'The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.' A cry and complaint came in before the bar of last Assembly for relief and redress of these and many grievances, both from ministers and people. But instead of a due regard had thereunto, an Act is passed confining the power of election unto heritors and elders, whereby a new wound is given to the prerogative of Christ and the privileges of His subjects. I shall say the less of this Act now, that I had opportunity to exoner myself with relation to it before the National Assembly where it was passed. Only allow me to say, that whatever Church authority may be in that Act, yet it wants the authority of the Son of God. All ecclesiastical authority under heaven is derived from Him, and therefore any Act that wants His authority has no authority at all. And seeing the reverend synod has put me in this place, where I am in Christ's stead, I must be allowed to say of this Act what I apprehend Christ himself would say of it were He personally present where I am; and that is, that by this Act the corner stone is receded from: He is rejected in His poor members, and the rich of this world put in their room. If Christ was personally present where I am by the synod's appointment in His stead, He would say in reference to that Act, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these little ones, ye did it to me.'"[1]

It will strike most people, on reading these passages, that for a preacher to assert that he is speaking what our blessed Saviour would have spoken, had He been in the same place, is little short of profanity. A matter of this kind is purely a question of Christian expediency, to be determined in accordance with the requirements of special circumstances. If a higher influence is to be presumed as being present in such deliberations, it is natural to assume that it will most probably be expressed in the deliverance of the collective wisdom of a regularly constituted church court which has carefully considered the particular case, and has invoked the Divine aid in its deliberations.

[1] The sermon is printed in full at the close of Gibb's "Secession Testimony Displayed," ii.

Apart from this, there can be no question that the declamation before the synod was utterly disloyal to the principles of Presbyterianism. The matter in dispute had been solemnly decided by the supreme court of the Church, to whose decisions Erskine had solemnly sworn at his ordination that he would submit. It would have been perfectly competent for him to have taken all constitutional means to have the decision reconsidered. But it was more than indecent, it was a positive violation of his pledges as a minister of the Gospel, to use the position which he held as moderator of an inferior court in order to assail the deliberate finding of the supreme judicatory.

When the synod met for the despatch of business, the minister of Logierait said that Mr. Erskine had said some things which had been offensive to the brethren. He moved for a committee to inquire into the matter. The committee was appointed, and reported that there were certain passages in the sermon which they considered disrespectful to the Assembly. There was a warm discussion upon the subject, which lasted for three days. At length, by a majority of six, the synod resolved to censure the preacher. Several members of the court dissented from the finding. Erskine himself appealed to the Assembly.

When the Assembly of 1733 came round, it chanced that both Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine had matter to come before it, although they were no longer members of the same presbytery. A minister named Stark had been settled in the parish of Kinross, in opposition to the wishes of a majority of the people, and also of the presbytery. The people refused to go to the parish church to receive the sacraments, and went in great numbers to the neighbouring parishes for that purpose. The presbytery refused to enrol Mr. Stark amongst their number, for what reason it is not easy to see. The Assembly of 1732 dealt with the business, ordained the presbytery to place Mr. Stark's name on their roll, and prohibited them from admitting the parishioners of Kinross to the ordinances without Mr. Stark's sanction. These injunctions were not complied with. Mr. Stark was not enrolled on the books of the presbytery, and his parishioners were regularly admitted to the sacraments by his neighbours without his permission. So the matter came up to the Assembly of 1733.

The case of Kinross came first. Ralph Erskine and his co-presbyters came to the bar. Some of the parishioners of Kinross, and the minister, presented a petition complaining that the sentence of last Assembly had not been obeyed. The presbytery were ordered to retire, constitute themselves into a court, and enrol Mr. Stark. The Assembly also passed an Act setting forth that their conduct had been inconsistent with the subordination of church judicatories, and with the vows of obedience they had taken at their ordination, and that it was worthy of the highest censure. It appointed them to be rebuked, enjoined them to recognize Mr. Stark as a minister of the Gospel, forbade them to admit his parishioners to ordinances without his consent, and, finally, it prohibited any protest or dissent on their part to be received by the presbytery.[1]

The last part of this sentence is the only part of it to which exception can be taken. It is a hard thing to prohibit any one from recording his protest against a sentence to which he has nevertheless to submit. His doing so can do no harm; it may relieve the natural feeling of grievance, and tend to smooth the whole matter over. But the Assembly may have felt that the presbytery deserved grave dealing, since their contumacy had been unusually marked. As to the first part of the deliverance, there could be no doubt of its propriety. The time was over for saying whether it was right or wrong for Mr. Stark to be inducted. He was now minister of Kinross. He was entitled to all the privileges of his position. The acts of the presbytery might at any time be called in question, as being vitiated, if they persisted in excluding him from their deliberations. The members of presbytery were acting in defiance of a known law of the Church when they admitted his parishioners to sealing ordinances without his consent. Moreover, the distinct and solemn finding of last Assembly had been deliberately disregarded. It was impossible for the present Assembly to do otherwise than admonish the refractory brethren, and insist on its being observed.

The case from the Synod of Perth and Stirling then came on. Ebenezer Erskine appeared at the bar supported by three friends: Wilson of Perth, Moncrieff of Abernethy, and Fisher of Kin-

[1] Acts of Assembly, v. 1733.

claven. He read a paper in his own defence, in which he argued that he was bound to give utterance to his sentiments, and that there was nothing in the Act that declared it unlawful to preach against it.[1] The Assembly found, however, that the language he had used in his synodical sermon was "offensive, and calculated to disturb the peace and good order of the Church." They appointed him also to be rebuked at the bar. But Erskine was not disposed to submit to such a sentence unreservedly. In anticipation of its being passed he had drawn up a protest, and it was signed by his three friends as well as by himself. He laid it upon the table and left the Assembly. Probably it would never have been heard of more, and the case would have come to an end, but for an accident. The paper on which the protest was written happened to fall from the table to the floor. Some one sitting near picked it up; but before replacing it he cast his eye over its contents, and was so indignant at the discourteous style in which the Assembly was spoken of, that he moved that the protesters should be again summoned to the bar.[2] They did appear, and a committee was appointed to confer with them, but they refused to withdraw their protest, or to depart from what they had said. The Assembly thought it right to give them time for consideration, and it remitted the case to the commission, directing the August meeting to suspend them from their functions unless they should retract, and to proceed to a higher censure at the November meeting unless they submitted to the sentence of suspension.

When the commission met in August, the four recusants appeared again, and as might have been anticipated, were not in any mood to retract. Sympathy was now widely felt for them. It was thought that Erskine had suffered enough for what was, after all, only hasty indiscretion. Memorials to this effect came to the commission from several quarters. But the commission held that they had only one duty to perform —perhaps even that they had no discretionary power. After some discussion Mr. Erskine was allowed to read a paper in which he warmly defended what he had done, instead of signifying contrition for it. By a certain irony of fate the

[1] Struthers' "History," i. 627–634, where the paper is given in full.
[2] M'Crie's "Story of the Scottish Church," 467.

candle by which he saw to read his protest in the growing darkness was held for him by a Mr. Archibald Rennie, who the very next year was settled in the parish of Muckhart by a riding committee.[1] The commission did what they had been told to do, and suspended the four ministers from the exercise of their ministerial functions.

When November came the four suspended ministers appeared at the bar of the commission once more, and intimated that they had paid no attention to the decree of suspension. They had preached and administered the sacraments, just as if no such decree had been pronounced.

Of course the commission could not pass over so grave a breach of discipline. Still many of their number shrank from proceeding to extreme measures. Perhaps some of them may have questioned the competency of what they had been empowered to do. At any rate, when the question was put, "Delay or Proceed" it carried "Proceed" only by the casting vote of the moderator. An effort to obtain even a modified withdrawal from the four brethren, by means of a committee, having failed, the commission pronounced a sentence severing the connection between these four ministers and their congregations, and declaring that they were no longer ministers of the Church of Scotland. This sentence was adopted instead of a proposal to depose them from the office of the ministry altogether, although the practical difference was not great. Seven ministers entered their dissent from this finding; and the four who had been thus dealt with protested that the pastoral tie between them and their people would not be affected by the sentence, and that they would still hold ministerial communion with such of their brethren in the Church as had not given way to the defections of the times. They testified also against the prevailing party in the Church as having declined from covenanted principles, suppressed ministerial freedom, and expelled them from their fellowship. "Therefore," they said, "we do, for these and many other weighty reasons to be laid open in due time, protest that we are obliged to make a secession from them, and that we can have no ministerial communion with them till they see their sins and mistakes and amend them. And in like manner we

[1] Cunningham's "History," ii. 435.

do protest that it shall be lawful and warrantable for us to exercise the keys of doctrine, discipline, and government according to the Word of God and the Confession of Faith, and the principles and constitutions of the covenanted Church of Scotland, as if no such censure had been passed upon us; upon all which we take instruments. And we hereby appeal to the first free, faithful, and reforming General Assembly of the Church of Scotland."[1] Shortly after this, on 5th December, 1733, the four ejected ministers, along with Ralph Erskine of Dunfermline, met at Gairney Bridge, a small village near Kinross, and after serious consultation and solemn prayer constituted themselves into the Associate Presbytery.

It has been asserted that the deplorable events which resulted in the first secession from the Church of Scotland were due to the dominant rule of Moderatism, as the efforts to induce Erskine and his friends to return to the Church—which we shall have to notice immediately—were the result of a temporary impulse towards Evangelical views. But statements of this sweeping character are misleading and unjust. The Moderate party, as it came ultimately to be known, cannot be said to have been fairly organized at this time. It was not till some years afterwards that it had a positive ascendency in the Church. It was the necessity to assert the principle of the due subordination of the several church courts that ultimately led to its consolidation. No doubt the principles of a moderate policy had been already apparent of late years, both in the case of the "Marrow" controversy and in the sentence upon Professor Simson. In the one case it was a zeal for orthodoxy which actuated the party; in the other, it was mercy towards the aged offender, without the slightest sympathy with his errors, or any attempt to condone them. For one of the principles of genuine Moderatism is the recognition that the law of a duly constituted government is sacred, and that the highest phase of duty, alike in ecclesiastical and in civil matters, is to defend it if it be good, and to obey it while it exists. It is this salutary principle which has guided the policy of Moderatism into that justice towards the individual, and that hearty recognition of the supremacy of constitutional authority, which it has steadily maintained

[1] "First Testimony of the Associate Synod," 32.

all through the history of the Church since the Revolution. Questions of doctrine are not essentially bound up with the principles of Moderatism. A liberal and enlightened view of doctrinal matters may, indeed, be looked for from the culture and sagacity with which it can grasp and carry out its views of general polity. But there have been marked differences of doctrinal tenet at different periods in the history of the principle. And it may be safely affirmed that the highly evangelical views of Gospel truth, which are frequently regarded as the exclusive property of the opposite school of ecclesiastical politicians, have been often to the full as vigorously asserted by the disciples of Moderatism.

The truth is that the dealing with Erskine and his friends which led to the schism, cannot fairly be attributed to either party. Adherents of both parties were evidently responsible for it. It was a specimen of that panic legislation which has so often led to disastrous consequences. Moderates forgot the claims of their lofty principle for the moment; Evangelicals forgot the claims of the Christian long-suffering which it was their just pride to enforce. Both were at fault in pushing Erskine's case to an extreme. The "Act anent Calls," which gave rise to the whole disturbance, was a fair and liberal measure. As a temporary shift—and that was all it pretended to be—it might well have been allowed to have a trial. Erskine's denunciation of it was uncalled for, and in the worst possible taste. At the same time the synod might have refrained from formally subjecting him to a rebuke. The sermon was the ebullition of an injudicious zealot, actuated doubtless by the most conscientious convictions. The members of synod might, if they pleased, have individually condemned his sentiments on the floor of the court, which would have been quite as effective a rebuke as any he could have been subjected to from the chair, and which would quite as thoroughly have exonerated their own consciences. The Assembly erred in taking notice of the protest. It was only human nature that the indignant defender of popular rights should wish to have the last word. What harm could the inflammatory document do if no one knew what was written in it? Later events proved, no doubt, that so impracticable and unyielding a man would almost

certainly, sooner or later, have found some cause for taking a similar course. But it is much to be regretted that the grievance he created was magnified into so grave a matter, and that he had not been so dealt with as to have given him time and opportunity for reflection; or that he had not been dealt with at all until such a reason had arisen for stringent measures as would have commended itself to the judgment and the sympathy of the country. Both parties also saw where they had gone wrong before the final crisis came, as was shown by the state of the vote in the November commission. They united for a time in the principles of Moderatism in efforts to remedy the evil. But it was too late. A principle which certainly cannot be called Moderatism had too strong a hold of Erskine and his friends, to permit of such efforts being undertaken, with any hope of success.

The four protesting brethren had hardly been disposed of in the manner we have narrated, when the Church saw that she had committed a mistake. The points which Erskine and his friends asserted were precisely such as would commend themselves to the people at large. They were all men of irreproachable character, and able ministers of the Gospel. The proceedings against them awakened widespread sympathy, and raised them into the place of martyrs. Their congregations clung all the more closely to them, in consequence of their position. When the ministers, who were appointed to intimate the sentence of the commission from their pulpits, attempted to do so, they were violently prevented by angry multitudes. The Synod of Perth and Stirling, where the mischief had originated, were foremost in the desire to see it rectified. They drew up an address to the General Assembly, at their spring meeting, in which they prayed the supreme court to petition the king and Parliament for the removal of the heavy yoke of patronage. They also asked that the Act of 1730 prohibiting dissents, and the Act of 1732, which had been Erskine's grievance, should be repealed; that the commission should be restrained from such tyrannous procedure as it had recently been guilty of; and that effectual means should be used to discourage mere moral preaching, to the neglect of the great and substantive doctrines of Christianity. The address concluded with the earnest entreaty

that as they, in that synod, most sorely felt the dismal consequences of the censures inflicted by the late Assembly and commission thereof upon four worthy brethren of their number, the General Assembly, as they regarded the peace and quiet of the Church, would take the most prudent and mild methods in order to take off the said censures, and to restore them again to the exercise of their functions and to their congregations.[1] Evidently the synod regretted deeply all that had occurred.

The response of the General Assembly to these representations was in no equivocal terms. The Act of 1730, by which reasons of dissent were forbidden to be recorded, and the Act of 1732 "Anent the Method of Planting Vacant Churches"—the object of Erskine's displeasure—were both rescinded, as having been passed contrary to the provisions of the Barrier Act. A resolution was passed which in effect expressed regret at the consequences of the process against Erskine and his friends, and empowered the Synod of Perth and Stirling to restore them if they should apply for restoration. In token of sincerity they appointed the synod to meet on the first Tuesday of July, three months before the usual time of meeting; and they enjoined it to use every effort to bring about a happy issue. The Assembly further declared that ministerial freedom was not to be regarded as curtailed by the action of the preceding Assembly, which was a dignified way of saying that ministers who had a mind to do so might declaim to any extent against acts of which they disapproved.[2] Finally, it appointed a deputation to proceed to London to make every exertion to procure the abolition of patronage.[3] Everything that Erskine and his friends could wish was done. Settlements by the presbytery were not to take place upon the call simply of the heritors and elders. Protests were to be recorded as often as they were made. Ministers might preach against doings of the church courts which they disliked, as freely as they pleased. The Assembly had done what it could to get rid of patronage. It might be supposed that the brethren, having got all they could possibly ask or expect, would be ready to return to the Church. But when the Synod of Perth and Stirling approached

[1] Cunningham's "History," ii. 439, 440, note. [2] Acts of Assembly, v. viii. ix., 1734.
[3] Moncrieff's "Life of Dr. John Erskine," Appendix.

them with overtures of restoration, these were haughtily repelled. Wilson, indeed, it is said, was prepared to return; but Erskine had sufficient influence over him to prevent him. He gave his reasons for refusing to return in a letter to the Presbytery of Stirling. He indicated that he was impelled to protest against the defections of the Church of Scotland. He had been swimming against the current whilst he was still in connection with that Church. Now he was taken out of the current by the hand of Providence, and it would be vain for them to endanger themselves by running into the current again. "There is a difference," he said, "to be made betwixt the Established Church of Scotland, and the Church of Christ in Scotland; for I reckon that the last is in a great measure driven into the wilderness by the first. And since God in His adorable providence has led us into the wilderness with her, I judge it to be our duty to tarry with her for a while there, and to prefer her afflictions to all the advantages of a legal establishment."[1]

Although repulsed in this manner, the Church still continued to hope that the breach was not irreparable. A second deputation to London to press for the abolition of patronage was sent up by the Assembly of 1735. In 1736 the Assembly passed an Act declaring that it was a principle that no minister should be intruded into a parish contrary to the will of the people, and that all presbyteries should have regard to this principle in the planting of vacant churches; although they were to be at pains to avoid everything that might excite or encourage unreasonable exceptions against a worthy minister.[2] But the seceders had now taken up their position, and were not to be moved from it. All the efforts of the Church to meet their scruples and to win them back were futile.

Towards the close of the year 1736, they published what may be regarded as their manifesto, under the title of their "Judicial Testimony," a document which should be minutely studied by any one who wishes to learn the real cause and origin of the secession. After dwelling upon the earlier history of the Church, and its struggles with Popery and Prelacy, and the bloody persecution it endured, it recounts the doings of the days of the Covenants, and declares them to be

[1] Fraser's "Life of Ebenezer Erskine." [2] Acts of Assembly, xiv., 1736.

perpetually binding, not only upon the Covenanters themselves, but upon their children and their children's children. It lauds the doings of the Protesters and Remonstrants, and mourns the defection of the black indulgence, the sinful oaths, and toleration of Popery by James. It sets forth that after the Revolution Prelacy was quietly set aside, without being reprobated as an accursed thing contrary to the Word of God. Presbytery was not declared to be of Divine right. There was no renewal of the Covenants. There was no mourning for the sins of the land. Many of the Episcopal hirelings were permitted to remain in their parishes. There came a union with England which was not on the lines of the old Covenanting union. The maintenance of Episcopacy in England was made an essential part of it. Boundless toleration was established by law. Patronage was restored in the Church of Scotland. The Christmas Recess was appointed. All these were national sins which might be justly reckoned among the grounds and causes of the Lord's indignation and controversy.

But there was more than this in the Testimony. There was heresy in the professors' chairs, and it was sheltered by the Assembly. The "Marrow of Modern Divinity" had been condemned, but Professor Simson had not been excommunicated, or even deposed. The land was profaned with immorality. Balls and night assemblies were taking place, sinful occasions of wantonness. An idolatrous picture of Jesus Christ had been well received in some of the most remarkable places of the land. The penal statutes against witches had been repealed, in defiance of the law of God, which said: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." In all this sin and defection the Church was involved. It behoved the seceders to lift up their Testimony against it.

No one can read this extraordinary document without being convinced that its authors could not, under any circumstances, have remained long in a Church which was moving onwards with the times. The synod sermon might or might not have been preached; it might or might not have been censured; but some other occasion must inevitably have arisen which would have produced similar results. A great and happy change was slowly passing over the Church of Scotland. Causes were at

work which were producing a revolution in sentiment and action. She was no longer under the terrible necessity of defending herself against the assaults of persecution; and she had the opportunity at her command, which her acknowledged position afforded her, of adapting her views and ministrations to a new condition of affairs. The fierce spirit which had been aroused by long years of hardship and cruelty, was disappearing under a milder influence. Ignorance and superstition were giving way. The influences of culture and learning were rapidly superseding the coarseness of diction, and manner, and thought, which had characterized a previous age. The broad and genial principles of toleration and respect for conscientious conviction were at last becoming known. The good leaven was at work in the Church as elsewhere; and it was producing an order of things which was a happy omen of better times and better work than the Church in her best days had ever hitherto enjoyed.

But there were some remaining who were incapable of sympathizing with this onward tendency. There are always those in every crisis, when the Church is passing over the barrier which separates the amenities of a higher and lovelier future from the asperities of a harder and narrower past, who cling to the old ways, be they bad or good, and who refuse to recognize anything in progress but defection. Of such, it must be owned, were Erskine and his confederates. They clung to the past with all its hard and repulsive features. They would have reproduced in the eighteenth century the bitterness and ignorance, even the superstition and cruelty, of the seventeenth. It is well that we have the "Judicial Testimony," and that we are acquainted with the after career of these stern fanatics. They could not have remained much longer within the pale of the Church, without finding themselves isolated and left behind in its growing amelioration. Probably they had sagacity enough to recognize this themselves; and the consciousness that they were unsuited for office in a community where their only position must have been that of protest, together with the knowledge that as seceders they were the observed of all observers, martyrs and confessors, to whom a section at least of the people paid glad, if unenlightened, homage, reconciled

them to the career that seemed opening out before them, and forbade them to listen to the overtures of peace.

Meantime contemporary events were proceeding in their ordi nary course. Professor Campbell, who held the chair of church history in St. Andrews, in attempting to reply to a sceptical book of the day, Tindall's "Christianity as Old as the Creation," contrived to lay himself open to charges of heresy. The case came before the Assembly; but although they thought it right to warn the professor against the use of ambiguous language, they unanimously found the charges against him "not proven." Most people on examining the question would have no doubt as to the propriety of the sentence; but it did not so commend itself to the authors of the "Judicial Testimony." They pronounced it, in that treatise, to be one of the defections of the times.

The proceedings in connection with the famous Porteous Mob, which took place in this year, furnished another instance of the Erastian subjection of the Establishment, as the seceders were pleased so to regard it. A noted smuggler, who by an act of daring during the performance of Divine worship, had effected the escape of his youthful coadjutor, was executed in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh. A Captain Porteous, who commanded the city guard, either observing, or fancying that he observed, some symptoms of an attempt at rescue, gave an order which his men believed to be the command to fire. They did fire accordingly, and killed several of the crowd. Porteous was tried for murder, and condemned to be executed; but the Queen-Regent, Caroline, and the ministry of the day interposed and granted him a reprieve of six weeks, it was evident with a view to the withdrawal of the sentence. But upon the evening before the sentence should have been carried out, a mob assembled silently and mysteriously, took possession of the city gates, disarmed the guard, broke open the doors of the Tolbooth, seized Porteous, who had concealed himself in the chimney of his room, and with great deliberation conveyed him to the Grassmarket, where they hanged him over a dyer's pole. The outrage caused much excitement, and the Government, and especially the Queen, was incensed at this defiance of authority. The Duke of Argyll, in trying to defend

the city of Edinburgh from retribution on the part of the Government, with which it was very unreasonably threatened, insinuated that the seceding ministers were in some manner responsible for it, as preachers of sedition (which they certainly were not).[1] A proclamation was issued for the discovery of the ringleaders, and every minister in Scotland was required to read it from the pulpit on the first Sunday of every month during a whole year. As may be imagined, this order gave the greatest dissatisfaction. Many refused to read it as incongruous with the sacred duties of the sanctuary, and an office which the Government had no right to impose upon the ministers of the Gospel. Those who did comply with the injunction were taunted by their friends, as the creatures of an overbearing power. The seceders were, of course, loudest in these reproaches, and the unhappy incident furnished them with another argument for their separation.

During all this time the seceders, although they had formally separated themselves from the Church, still retained their livings, and officiated as before in their parish churches. They had constituted themselves, however, into a separate presbytery, and appointed a professor of divinity to train students for the ministry. Unseemly wrangles were taking place. The charge of Dunfermline was, as it still is, a collegiate charge. Ralph Erskine would inveigh against the Established Church at the morning service, while his colleague would reply to him from the same pulpit in the afternoon.[2] Ebenezer Erskine debarred five of his own elders in Stirling from their seats in the kirk-session, because they differed from him as to the secession. Litigation and heartburning ensued, and at length Erskine summoned the five elders, by name from the pulpit of Stirling, to appear before the judgment seat of Christ on the day appointed in God's decree.[3]

This state of matters could not be allowed to continue. If the Church had been hasty at first, she had shown the utmost leniency in the later stages of the conflict. But there was a limit to forbearance. In 1738 the Synod of Perth and Stirling, which had been chiefly concerned in the controversy, laid before

[1] Struthers' "History," ii. 37. [2] Fraser's "Life of Ralph Erskine."
[3] Libel before the Assembly, 1739.

the Assembly a complaint "of the disorderly practices of certain seceding ministers from this Church." The Assembly enjoined all the ministers who had access to the seceders to endeavour to bring them back to a sense of their duty. It authorized the commission to summon them before the next Assembly; and it recommended all ministers to do their utmost to reclaim the deluded people who had been carried away by the division. The commissioners accordingly invited the seceders to a conference, but they declined to recognize the commission. There was therefore no alternative. A libel was prepared, charging Erskine and his coadjutors with withdrawing from the judicatories of the Church; constituting themselves into a separate presbytery; publishing their "Act and Declaration," and their "Judicial Testimony;" licensing a preacher; intruding into parishes and administering the sacraments where they had no jurisdiction; exercising discipline in defiance of sentences already pronounced by the regular courts, and generally with following divisive courses contrary to their ordination vows.[1]

The Assembly met on the 10th of May, 1739. There was a difference of opinion as to whether the libel should be prosecuted, or longer time given to the seceders. Some said that severe measures would only increase the schism, and that the seceders were themselves taking the most likely means to crush it out by their extravagant doings. Others said that the Church was rent by the scandalous work of the seceders, that nothing had come of the seven years' forbearance which had been shown them, and that it was time that justice should take its course.[2] By a narrow majority it was resolved to proceed with the libel, and the seceders were called to the bar. They appeared, but in their character as an associate presbytery, with their moderator at their head. They were urged to consider their disorderly courses, and to submit to the Church to which they had vowed obedience. The moderator told them that although they came there to answer to a libel, the Assembly was ready to receive them with open arms, and besought them to be no longer deaf to the calls of reason and Scripture.[3] But the seceders declined all accommodation, and proposed to read their Act of Presbytery,

[1] See libel published with the "Testimonies of the Associate Synod."
[2] Morren's "Annals of the Assembly," 6, 7. [3] Ibid. 7.

abjuring the authority of the Church of Scotland. The libel was read, upon which they read their paper. It was a repetition of the old arguments. The defections of the Church had become intolerable. It was intruding ministers on congregations who dissented from the appointments. It was countenancing error and heresy. The courts of the Church were subordinate to the civil courts by acquiescing in the proclamation of the Porteous Mob from the pulpits. For these and other reasons the seceders declared that the judicatories of the National Church were not lawfully constituted courts of Christ's Church. Therefore they declined their authority. They protested that any sentence the Assembly should pass would be null and void; that their pastoral relation to their congregations would not be broken; and that any persons put in their places would be intruders. And they besought "in the bowels of Christ, their reverend, worthy, and dear brethren and elders, to come out from the present judicatures, and from all ministerial communion with the Church of Scotland, as they would not be partakers of their sins, and put to their hand to lift up the standard of a judicial testimony for the borne-down truths of God, for our reformation principles, and purging the house of God after the example of our worthy progenitors."[1]

The case was hopeless after this. The seceders were asked to withdraw when they had read their paper. They did so, and when they were summoned to return, they did not appear. The libel was found proven; but by a stretch of forbearance the Assembly resolved not to proceed to censures for yet another year, in the hope that at the last moment the schism might be averted. But all such hopes were vain. The seceders had gone too far to turn back. It was not desirable that they should, after all that they had said and done.

The Assembly of 1740 met on the 10th of May. The main topic of interest was, of course, the sentence which every one saw must now be pronounced. The seceders were called, but they did not answer. It was agreed by a large majority that they should be deposed from the ministry. But still seasoning justice with mercy, the Assembly delayed passing the sentence till the afternoon of the 15th, so that they might draw the

[1] Act and Declaration, abbreviated from Morren, "Annals," 9.

half year's stipend due at that term. It was a gracious act, worthy of the long series of acts of grace which had been extended to them. For eight years the Seceders had been allowed to remain in their livings, drawing their stipends and occupying their manses, which, strange to say, they did not scruple to do, while for the greater portion of that time they were associated together as a separate brotherhood, and were largely occupied in vilifying the Church whose bread they ate, and whose forbearance they abused. Their after history was for many years in melancholy keeping with that of their departure from the Church; and although their descendants have done much to obliterate memories that had best be forgotten, by a liberality of sentiment and an energy in good work that claims our regard, yet no one can recall the story of the first secession from the Church of Scotland, without a feeling of unspeakable regret that in a cause where patriotism and religion in their highest forms might fairly have been expected to exert their sway, the unsightly spectacle was presented to the world of a church convulsed and rent asunder by the violence of a fanaticism, which was all the more repulsive because it arrogated to itself the exclusive possession both of principle and of piety.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FROM THE DEPOSITION OF THE SECEDERS (1740) TO THE AGITATION FOR AUGMENTATION OF MINISTERS' STIPENDS (1749).

Whitefield and the Seceders—The Cambuslang Revival—The Ministers' Widows' Fund—State of the Church—Character of the clergy—Preaching—Professor Leechman—Rebellion of 1745—The Edinburgh ministers and Charles Edward—After the rebellion—Severe measures against the Episcopal clergy—Burghers and Anti-burghers—Proposal to increase ministers' stipends—Final settlement.

SHORTLY after the final rupture between the Church and the seceders, Scotland was visited by the great English preacher, George Whitefield. He was now at the height of his fame. No man had ever swayed a popular English audience with the same overwhelming power. He had travelled over England and over a great part of America, fired by the one theme—inspired with the inspiration of the Gospel. He preached neither politics nor sectarianism, neither the Church nor Dissent, neither Prelacy nor Presbytery. He preached Christ and Him crucified. To some extent this free unmingled Gospel was new to the people. They had been accustomed either to the stiff and dignified addresses of the clergy, often far above their heads, or to the declamatory ranting of nonconformists. Whitefield preached what came home to the hearts of rich and poor, learned and unlearned. He did so with all the power of a rich and thoroughly modulated voice, with a command of the most appropriate and striking imagery, and with a pathos and earnestness which told that his own heart was filled with what he spoke.

It is not to be wondered at that, adrift upon the ocean of popular approbation, the seceders, while perhaps scarcely conscious of their motive, should have looked anxiously round for every means of strengthening their position. Doubtless they felt that if it became known that they were in close friendship and alliance with the great orator, it must tend to their increased influence amongst their own people, and even to their good report where they were not personally known. They entered into correspondence with Whitefield therefore, and

invited him to visit them. They, indeed, indicated to him enough to show that their views were much more circumscribed than he was likely to sympathize with; as, that they should expect him to renounce his prelatic ordination, that he should embrace Presbyterianism and sign the Covenants, and that he should confine his preaching to their meeting-houses. Whitefield positively declared that if he came to Scotland, he would come as an itinerant preacher, ready to preach the Gospel wherever he had opportunity.[1] But probably the seceders thought that they would be able to keep him to themselves if they once had him; and it may be that Whitefield scarcely realized the extreme sectarian narrowness he was to encounter at their hands. He came to Scotland in the middle of the summer of 1741. Declining overtures which were made to him to remain for a time in Edinburgh, he hurried on to Dunfermline, and took up his quarters with Ralph Erskine. The minister of the meeting-house in Dunfermline was by no means so austere as his brother in Stirling. He was a musician and a humorist. He had more sagacity and tact than his brother, although he had not the same powers as a preacher. But he could not resist the opportunity he now had of endeavouring to make a proselyte of Whitefield. It is said that Whitefield owned that his reception of prelatic orders was in the days of his ignorance, and that, encouraged by this admission, Erskine began to urge him to confine his preaching to the seceders, as the only true people of the Lord in Scotland. But Whitefield refused in unequivocal terms to come under any such pledge. "If a Jesuit or a Mahometan were to ask him to preach," he said, "he would do it to testify against them."[2] He preached that night in the meeting-house at Dunfermline, but he at once left for Edinburgh, where he accepted the invitation of some of the metropolitan ministers, and preached in the Canongate Church. Afterwards he returned to Dunfermline, to have a conference with the Associate Presbytery. They endeavoured to "set him right" as to church government and the Solemn League and Covenant. Whitefield told them that it was not his plan to preach upon such matters. He said he had never studied the Covenants, having been occupied with matters he considered more important. But he

[1] Fraser's "Life of Ralph Erskine," 324, 325. [2] Ibid.

was answered that every pin of the tabernacle was precious. Whitefield at once gauged the characters he had to deal with. He left the meeting; he wept, he prayed in his chamber. Then he preached in the open fields, afterwards dined with the brethren, and took a final farewell. The seceders knew of no middle course. They must either be warm friends or deadly enemies. They now denounced Whitefield as an emissary of the devil, and the breach between them was never healed.

The pulpits of the Church were, however, open to Whitefield. He preached frequently in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and in many country parishes, generally in the churchyard or in some field adjoining. There was no edifice large enough to contain the crowds that flocked to hear him. And Scotland was no exception to the power he wielded so universally. Wherever he preached multitudes owned the influence of the pure Gospel he set before them, and submitted to its sway.

In the year following Whitefield's first visit to Scotland there occurred that remarkable work, which is known as the Cambuslang Revival. We are not unused to such demonstrations in our own times; but at that period they had been unknown for many years in Scotland, at least in the particular form in which they then showed themselves. The movement could not be directly attributed to Whitefield's preaching, for although he had visited several parishes in the west of Scotland he had never been at Cambuslang. The minister, Mr. M'Culloch, was a man of great piety and earnestness, though not famed as a preacher. He had dwelt much during the previous winter on the distinctive doctrines of the Gospel, and, at the request of his people, he had instituted a week-day service in addition to those of the Sunday. One evening, in the course of his address, he happened to quote the text, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" when cries arose as of persons in great distress of mind. This was the beginning of the remarkable movement, which excited so deep an interest over the whole kingdom. Scenes like those on the evening in question became common. But the phenomena speedily assumed a much more pronounced and ecstatic form. Some clapped their hands, others beat upon their breasts, some bled profusely at the nose,

others fell into convulsions. These were the outward manifestations of corresponding mental excitement. Those who were the subjects of it often declared that they saw hell opening beneath them, and that they heard the shrieks of the damned. Often they came quickly into a reaction of delight. They had passed from darkness to light. They saw Christ with a pen in his hand blotting out their sins. Sometimes rising up in the congregation they called upon all to join them in singing a psalm, which they said God had commanded them to sing. Ignorant enthusiasts were not wanting, as they seldom are in such movements, who stimulated the irregularities, which required little in that state of public excitement to urge them on.[1]

Whitefield had left Scotland before these manifestations took place, but as soon as he heard what was going forward at Cambuslang he returned. The excitement became still more intense under his wonderful eloquence. The sacrament of the supper was celebrated in July, and, in marked exception to the usual practice in Scotland at the time, which was to have celebration not more than once a year in each parish, it was repeated in August. It was then the fervour reached its highest point. Thirty thousand people assembled. Fourteen ministers took part in the services. Twenty-five "tables" were filled with communicants eager to partake of the sacred symbols.[2] At ten o'clock at night Whitefield rose to preach the "evening sermon," with which these solemn occasions were always concluded. The wooden "tent" in which the preacher stood was placed on the brink of a small stream, which winds round the knoll on which stands the parish church. A green bank rose up from its margin, forming a natural amphitheatre which, from the stirring scenes witnessed there at that time, is still known as the "Conversion Brae." The vast multitude clustered on the sward. Whitefield, as he opened his sermon, spoke of the place as a temple built by God Himself for His people to worship in. No circumstances could be conceived more picturesque or more fitted to quicken the enthusiasm already aroused. As Whitefield's appeals rolled over the assemblage in the still autumn evening, sobs and tears

[1] "Original Statistical Account of Scotland," v.. art. "Cambuslang;" Struthers' "History," ii. 69.
[2] Ibid.

from all parts of the crowd confessed the power he was exerting over them.

It was to be expected that different opinions would be formed of the genuineness of the "Cambuslang *wark*," as it was called, according to the extent of sympathy which might be individually felt for such demonstrations. We have seen so many of them in our own time, that the physical manifestations, with which they are often accompanied, have ceased to excite the surprise which naturally arose when they were first brought under the notice of the Scottish people, a century and a half ago. Even yet these periodical waves of religious excitement are regarded by many good people with considerable suspicion. They feel that the excitement is often unreal, that it is apt to produce a corresponding reaction, and that the moral fervour suddenly aroused is likely to be succeeded by a moral inertness, which will more than neutralize any of the beneficial effects of the time of awakening. So dispassionate and accurate a thinker as Mr. Hill Burton does not hesitate to characterize the movement at Cambuslang, as "one of those strange and melancholy exhibitions called religious revivals." The truth is, that in all such manifestations there is a mixture of good and evil. There is almost always much true and solid Christian advancement, generally built upon foundations that have been laid long before. The physical phenomena ought to be discouraged and subdued. It is much to the credit of the more intelligent of those who have had to do with such demonstrations, in recent times, that they invariably seek to control all extravagance, and to direct the belief of their inquirers, with the sober-mindedness which is so marked a feature of Scriptural teaching. It was not, therefore, wonderful that the less impulsive, and perhaps the more sagacious of the ministers and elders of the Church of Scotland, should have hesitated to countenance a great deal that was done during the Cambuslang revival. But it was hardly to be expected that the seceders, who were disposed to assume to themselves the character of a specially eminent piety, should have looked coldly upon the awakening. Yet so it was. It seems a hard thing to say, but it appears evident that the seceders and the Cameronians had so convinced themselves that no good could possibly live in the Established Church, that they came to the

conclusion that the work, which so many believed to be of God, was, on the contrary, a delusion of the devil. The seceders denounced it from the pulpit and in the press. They appointed the 4th of August to be observed as a day of fasting and humiliation throughout their whole body, for the countenance given to Whitefield, "a priest of the Church of England who had sworn the oath of supremacy, and abjured the Solemn League and Covenant," and for the "symptoms of delusion attending the present awful work upon the bodies and spirits of men, going on at Cambuslang." The Cameronians, or M'Millanites, as they were now called, published "The Declaration, Protestation, and Testimony of the Suffering Remnant of the Anti-Popish, Anti-Lutheran, Anti-Prelatic, Anti-Whitefieldian, Anti-Erastian, Anti-Sectarian, true Presbyterian Church of Christ in Scotland, against Mr. George Whitefield and his encouragers, and against the work at Cambuslang and other places." They denounce "the present lukewarm Laodicean ministers and professors of this Erastian Church, whose ways are such as may astonish the heavens and make them horribly afraid and very desolate, because they have forsaken the Lord . . . by going in the way of Egypt and Assyria to drink the waters of Sihor and the poisonable puddles of prelacy and sectarianism." Whitefield is called an "abjured prelatic hireling, of as lax toleration principles as ever set up for advancing the kingdom of Satan." They find that the whole affair "looks like the time wherein the devil is come down to Scotland, having great power, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

Of course such fearful language called forth bitter recrimination, especially from those who believed the "Cambuslang *wark*" to be the work of the Holy Ghost. Mr. Robe, the minister of Kilsyth, whose parish was visited in a similar manner, declared the "Protestation of the Associate Presbytery to be the most heaven-daring paper which had been published by any set of men in Britain for a century past."[1] It was a sad example of what sectarian bitterness and uncharitable feeling can produce amongst Christians. The movement was probably neither much better nor much worse than similar movements have been since then. The excitement died down, and the parish returned to

[1] Robe's "History of the Revivals at Cambuslang and Kilsyth."

its usual quiet; while there is no doubt that its religious spirit was, for a time at least, sensibly quickened.

We must pause to notice a work, of much importance to the comfort of the ministers of the Church of Scotland, which was originated in the Assembly of 1742. This was the institution of the Widows' Fund, a scheme for making provision for the widows and families of deceased ministers which, from the slender income of most of them, had become absolutely necessary. In those days the elaborate calculations had not been made, which have now reduced the process of life insurance to a science. Tables had to be specially prepared for the purposes of this fund. The work was undertaken by Dr. Webster, a celebrated Edinburgh minister, a leader of the Evangelical party, a powerful and popular preacher, and a man of so genial a temperament that his society was as eagerly sought by social circles as it was, according to some, only too readily bestowed. He was aided in the preparation of the intricate calculations which had to be made, by Dr. Robert Wallace, also of Edinburgh, who, besides being an eminent minister, was also an accomplished mathematician. At first it was proposed to assess all the livings in Scotland at an equal rate of £4 yearly, and to give each widow remaining unmarried an annuity of £20. This proposal was afterwards modified, however, and a differential rate was adopted, with annuities on a corresponding scale. The widows and children of the professors in the universities were also included in the benefits of the fund. The Assembly of 1743 approved of the scheme, and resolved to apply for an Act of Parliament to make its provisions obligatory. The Act was obtained, and it came into force in March, 1744.[1]

The change that was insensibly coming over all classes of society in Scotland was now beginning to affect the manners of the Scottish ministers, and their work. All that we can gather of the character of the more eminent is exceedingly pleasing. The simplicity of life which had for so long prevailed had not yet disappeared. It was well suited to the modest incomes of the Scottish ministers, who, notwithstanding their unostentatious demeanour, maintained the dignity which befitted their sacred calling, and enjoyed the esteem of all

[1] Morren's "Annals of the Assembly," i., 1743 and 1744.

classes. In all parts of the country there were examples of ministers, occupied with the simple routine of their homely duties, but discharging them with a zeal and faithfulness which commanded universal respect. Many of the incumbents of country parishes were related to the best families in the county, and by the refinement which their frequent contact with the learned and cultured imparted to their own ways, they helped, in no small degree, towards the diffusion of those principles of kindly courtesy which tend so largely to knit together the different classes of society.[1]

The heads of the schools of divinity in the universities were becoming anxious that their students should cultivate the elegances of composition in their sermons. The intimacy of the northern with the southern parts of the kingdom was opening up the splendid literature of England, with its noble specimens of pulpit eloquence, to the scholars and the literati of Scotland. It became evident to the more sagacious of the Scottish clergy that the mode of preaching, which found favour in the rude days of the Covenants and of the persecutions, was no longer adapted to the progress of the times, and that a new style of address must be adopted, if the Church was to maintain its influence upon the country at large. Several of the professors of divinity were also the ministers of some of the most prominent churches in the university cities, so that they were not only able to prelect upon the necessary features of a successful mode of preaching, but to exemplify them in their own pulpits. There was, however, much jealousy lest innovation in doctrine should accompany the revolution in pulpit methods. Every shade of variation from the ordinary Calvinism was scrutinized with the utmost vigilance, lest it should contain the seeds of heresy. One of the most popular preachers in Edinburgh, Principal Wishart, was prosecuted for promulgating the doctrine from the pulpit that self-love was not a religious motive. Dr. Campbell of St. Andrews had been prosecuted shortly before, for a similar metaphysical heresy. Both Dr. Wishart and Dr. Campbell were acquitted by the Assembly,

[1] See a most interesting account of the Scottish clergy of this period in "Scotland and Scotsmen of the Eighteenth Century," from the MSS. of John Ramsay, Esq., of Ochtertyre, i. 219–308.

and a few years after Dr. Wishart's prosecution he was raised to the moderator's chair.

Soon afterwards another case from Glasgow was brought up. The professor of divinity in that university, Dr. Leechman, had recently been promoted from the parish of Beith. He was already well known in the Church as an exceedingly attractive preacher, and his elevation to the chair alone precluded him from having to decide between competing calls from parishes, each of which was desirous to secure his services. Much was anticipated from his appointment to the chair of theology in Glasgow. His culture, taste, and power as a pulpit orator, were sure, it was thought, to have the happiest results upon the minds of the young men committed to his care. Moreover, he was a man of "primitive and apostolic manners, equally distinguished by his love of literature and his liberal opinions."[1] But he had published a pamphlet shortly before his induction to the chair, into which he had condensed the substance of a course of sermons upon prayer. It was intended as the refutation of a treatise, which appeared about the same time, maintaining the uselessness of prayer as absurd and unreasonable, and a profane attempt to interfere with the established laws of nature. The professor, however, although he meant well, had not been able to escape some such ambiguities of statement as awakened the suspicions of persons who were only too quick to scent out anything that savoured of heresy. One of the principal actors in the recent revival, Mr. Robe of Kilsyth, perhaps with more zeal than either prudence or charity, expressed himself as alarmed lest Leechman's "dry morality," as he was pleased to call it, should affect the aspirants to the ministry of the Church.[2] A judicial inquiry was accordingly made, at the instance of an elder, who stated, in the Presbytery of Glasgow, that many had been offended by Dr. Leechman's views on prayer. At first it seemed as if the case was to be a repetition of the case of Professor Simson. But Leechman was more wary, and perhaps also better liked. He declared, in reply to allegations preferred against his pamphlet or sermon, that it bore only on one phase of the doctrine.

[1] Moncrieff's "Life of Dr. John Erskine," 85.
[2] Robe of Kilsyth's "Account of Leechman's Trial."

It was intended to meet the infidel argument that prayer was a profane attempt to set aside the laws which had been appointed by the Creator, and to show that prayer was alike consistent with the dictates of reason and the precepts of Scripture. The fact that he did not dwell upon the Name in which prayer must be made, by no means demonstrated, as had been alleged, that his views on that particular point were heterodox.

Leechman complained to the synod, while the presbytery were considering the case. The synod almost unanimously found in his favour, after hearing his explanations. When the case came before the Assembly, a similar finding was arrived at without difficulty; and the good feeling of the court was so marked that the moderator alluded to it in his closing address as an example of the Christian charity, which ought always to prevail in church courts, even when occupied in the solemn duty of asserting the purity of the Church's doctrine.[1] There was really no ground for the accusation. It found fault not with what Dr. Leechman said, but with what he did *not* say —a process always difficult, often, as in this case, dangerous and unjust. It was fortunate that the temper of the Assembly discouraged the attempt at what cannot be otherwise described than paltry persecution, and that the eminent talents and the saintly piety of the professor were saved for service to the Church for many a year to come.

The country was now once more in the midst of a rebellion— the last effort of the fated house of Stuart to retrieve its shattered fortunes. The story of that romantic episode is too well known to demand that it shall be told again here:—How the gallant young prince, landing with but a few adherents, fascinated the reluctant chiefs and gentry who joined him in his hopeless enterprise; how he swept down from the hills with the resistless impetus of the mountain torrent; entered Edinburgh; defeated the royalists at Prestonpans; and after holding court at Holyrood once more—wasting, it must be admitted, the precious moments which, if redeemed, might have rendered possible, at least, a temporary success—proceeded on his march to the south, penetrating to within a hundred miles of London; but how, with

[1] Morren's "Annals," i., Appendix.

failing resources and disaffection in his counsels, he was obliged, sore against his will, to retrace his steps, seeking again the Highland fastnesses, where he still hoped to make good his position, until the fatal morning when his famine-stricken troops melted away before the onslaught of the Duke of Cumberland on the bleak moor of Culloden, and the star of the Stuart dynasty set for ever.

The Church was loyal to the Government in the midst of the excitement of the insurrection. The pulpits counselled faithfulness. Even the Cameronians, who had testified against the Georges as uncovenanted kings, cast in their lot with them, as against the prospects of a popish monarch. The seceders were equally decided. Companies of volunteers were hastily formed all over the country; and one night, while an attack was expected, the Stirling contingent, assembled in the guard-room, were surprised, when Ebenezer Erskine joined them in full military accoutrement, saying, on being urged to go home to his prayers, that the occasion demanded both the arms and the prayers of all good subjects.[1] When Charles lay in Holyrood after the battle of Preston, he caused circulars to be sent to the Edinburgh clergy, asking them to continue the exercises of public worship as usual. It is said that the reverend divines, mingling prudence with their loyalty alike to Church and king, requested to be made aware if they might pray as usual for King George. The reply was to the effect that while positive permission to do so would scarcely be consistent with his mission and his claim, the prince would take care that the clergy should suffer no inconvenience for any imprudent words they might use. M'Vicar of the West Church—which lay at that time beyond the walls of the city, but protected by the castle guns—either in response to this declaration of immunity, or of his own fearless and loyal impulse, prayed as follows:—"As to this young person who has come amongst us seeking an earthly crown, do Thou, in Thy merciful favour, give him a heavenly one."[2]

Culloden was fought upon the 16th of April, and before the Assembly met in May the country was in quietness again. An address of congratulation was drawn up and forwarded

[1] Fraser's "Life of Ebenezer Erskine," 439.
[2] Sir Walter Scott's "Tales of a Grandfather," 406.

to the king, and a day of thanksgiving appointed for deliverance from the Pope and the Pretender. Cumberland, who had commanded the royalist forces, had forwarded a letter to the commissioner, highly extolling the loyalty of the Presbyterian ministers. When the day of thanksgiving came round it was observed with all sincerity, and as may well be supposed, there were few pulpits without their panegyric on the Duke.

It was not so with the Episcopal clergy. Many of them were deeply implicated in the rising. The Government were well aware of it, and Cumberland was fully empowered to make reprisals. He burnt their chapels whenever he came upon them in the line of his march. They could hardly expect more lenient treatment. But this was not all. As soon as the excitement of the civil war had passed away, an Act was passed of a most stringent nature, bearing on Scottish Episcopacy. It provided that if any person should exercise the function of pastor or minister in any Episcopal meeting-house in Scotland, without registering his letters of orders, taking all the oaths required by law, and praying for King George and the royal family by name, he should for the first offence suffer six months' imprisonment, and for the second be transported to some one of his Majesty's plantations for life. Every house in which five or more persons, besides its usual occupants, assembled, was declared to be a meeting-house. No letters of orders were henceforth to be registered, except such as had been issued by a bishop of the Church of England or of Ireland. Any one attending an illegal Episcopal meeting, without giving information of it within five days, could be fined or imprisoned. A peer guilty of this crime was disqualified to sit in Parliament; and a commoner was in like manner disqualified to serve in the House of Commons.[1] The tables were turned upon the Episcopalians. Two years afterwards another Act was passed, by which it was provided that no Episcopal orders whatever should be recognized in Scotland, but those which had been conferred by English or Irish bishops. Scottish Episcopal orders were now unlawful. Their holders might be imprisoned if they exercised ecclesiastical functions under them. This measure was, however, strenuously opposed by the whole Epis-

[1] Stephen's "History," iv.

copal bench.[1] Unquestionably it savoured of persecution. It was as civilians that the Jacobite Episcopalians should have been punished, not as adherents of a certain mode of worship. The only excuse for the measures was that Scottish Episcopalians were bound neck and heel to the Stuart dynasty. Their determination to secure the return of that house to the throne was scarcely concealed. It was not surprising that the advisers of the reigning dynasty, after so severe a lesson as they had received in the '45, and in those days when religious toleration was little understood, should adopt every measure to weaken the influence of their opponents, and prevent a recurrence of so disastrous an experience.

The seceders again claim our notice, as soon as the more stirring times of the rebellion are over. There was a clause in the oath which every burgess had to take, to the effect "that he professed and allowed within his heart the true religion presently professed within the realm, and authorized by the laws thereof." On the outlook, doubtless, for everything in their daily and public life in any degree inconsistent with the rigid purity they professed, the more punctilious began to have serious doubts as to their moral right to take such an oath. The Erskines headed a party who declared that they had no scruples on the subject. The "true religion" could only mean the religion they themselves held to; for they were the true Church. There could be no harm in swearing obedience to that. On the other hand, it was maintained that the "true religion" meant the religion authorized by the law. It was an unworthy quibble in any one to assume that it could be held to apply to his own peculiar mode of belief. It was the religion of the Established Church which was undoubtedly referred to in the oath. The seceders, therefore, could on no account take it, for they had protested against that Church; neither could they permit their people to take it. They could not be parties to allow those, of whom they had the spiritual oversight, to perjure themselves.

The matter came before the Associate Synod in April, 1746. It was warmly debated, and in the end it was resolved that the burgess oath should not be taken by any of their members, and

[1] Stephen's "History," iv.

that those who had taken it already must appear before the kirk session of the congregations to which they belonged, and make confession of the sin into which they had fallen. Unless they did so, they could not be admitted into the bond for the renewal of the Covenants. But there was a large minority in the synod who did not agree with this resolution. Nearly the half protested against it; and the controversy was soon carried down to every kirk session and congregation. It was a very trifling question, but the acrimony in such debates is often directly converse to the paltriness of the dispute. The party feeling ran high. Books were written on both sides. Ministers and elders abused each other, and it need hardly be said that the Erskines were in the forefront of the battle, and as bitter as any. In April, 1747, the synod met again, and after two days of fierce debate came to an open rupture. The two parties separated, taking the names of Burghers and Anti-burghers, and each claiming to be the true Associate Synod. But the Anti-burghers were not content with separation. They drew up a libel against the Burghers, and summoned them to their bar. The Burghers did not appear. The Anti-burghers treated them as contumacious. Erskine and his party cared very little for their censures. The Anti-burghers proceeded from one censure to another, until they finally committed their former close allies, and fellow-protesters against the iniquities of the Established Church, to Satan, in the sentence of the "greater excommunication."[1] The breach remained open for a hundred years, and for a great part of that time the sentiments, with which the two branches of the Secession regarded each other, were quite as uncharitable as those which they both maintained towards the Church.

Although the position of a parish minister in Scotland was one of much influence, and was always held in respect, it was not, at the time of which we write, and it is not now, a position of large emolument. The ancient revenues of the Church were to a great extent alienated, as we have seen, at the Reformation. During the various vicissitudes which the Church underwent in her conflict with Episcopacy, her revenues did not increase. They were now altogether insufficient for the adequate main-

[1] Struthers' "History of Scotland," ii. 563.

tenance of the ministers and their households. According to a table prepared at the time, one of the stipends was actually less than £25 a year, and they ranged from about that sum to £138 17*s.* 9¾*d.*, which was the highest stipend in Scotland![1] £50,000 a year, it was reported, paid all the stipends, while £60,000 worth of unappropriated teinds were held annually by the landed proprietors.

The subject was brought before the Assembly of 1749 by overtures from synods and presbyteries. The minister of Sorn, Mr. Steele, spoke ably in support of them, and showed with much force how utterly inadequate the stipends now were, which had been barely sufficient at the time when they were fixed, a hundred and twenty years before. He asked that the legislature should be approached with a request that they would fix an adequate minimum of stipend.[2] Mr. Steele was opposed by the Earl of Marchmont, a nobleman who had acquired some reputation as a speaker in the House of Commons. He seems to have supposed that he ought to have special weight in the General Assembly; for he was the grandson of Sir Patrick Hume, and the nephew of Lady Grizel Baillie. His speech was an offensive specimen of vulgar and purse-proud ignorance, and was justly resented, not only by the clergy whom he rudely assailed, but by many of his own order also.[3] The plan, however, which had been proposed was, it must be confessed, but crude and ill digested, and Lord Marchmont's proposal for fuller inquiry, and the adoption of a better devised scheme, was not unnaturally adopted by the house.

A committee was appointed, whose inquiries amply confirmed the statements which had been made. The committee recommended that application be made to Parliament, for a measure to facilitate processes of augmentation before the Court of Teinds; and to raise the *minimum* stipend which had been fixed, a hundred and twenty years before, at eight chalders of victual, to ten chalders, or their value in money. But moderate as this proposal was, it found no favour with the teind-holders, from whom the increase was to be drawn, although the teinds were church property, of which they were but life-renters, under an obligation to maintain the ordinances of religion decently. There was a

[1] Cunningham's "History," ii. 482, note. [2] Morren's "Annals," 1749. [3] Ibid.

violent debate in the Assembly, in which the ministers and the elders were in general arrayed against each other. The report, however, was approved of, and a deputation appointed to go to London, to further the matter there. But the landed proprietors instantly organized a vigorous opposition. All sorts of combinations were formed against the scheme. It was discussed at county meetings, and over the dinner tables of the nobility and the lairds. Pamphlets were written on both sides. When the ministers represented that there were more than a hundred stipends under £40 a year, they were at once answered that there were seventeen hundred in England and Wales under £20. Friends of the Church, elders who sat in kirk sessions and in the Assembly, opposed the augmentation scheme with a virulence which showed only too plainly that their friendship for the Church was not worth the slightest pecuniary sacrifice in her favour. The deputation appointed by the Assembly went to London, but in face of so powerful an opposition their case was hopeless. They spent months of fruitless labour, and finally were compelled to give up the proposal.[1]

It may, perhaps, be well to record here how this matter was finally settled, although we shall have to anticipate the course of our narrative in order to do so. Sixty years passed before any effectual attempt was made to resume the negotiations broken off in 1750. The evil complained of then was increasing every year. Wherever there was no teind to warrant an augmentation of stipend, the livings remained the same as they were nearly two hundred years before, and the ministers were often in great poverty. But at length, after many representations had been made to them, the statesmen of the day became convinced that something must be done. On the 15th of June, 1810, an Act was passed for "Augmenting Parochial Stipends in certain cases in Scotland." The character of the Act will be best learned from its preamble, which sets forth that in many parishes in Scotland, on account of the depreciation in the value of money, the stipends of the ministers had become inadequate to their support; and that on account of the valuation and purchase of the teinds, no fund existed out of which an augmenta-

[1] See "Memorials of Oswald of Dunnikier," where the keenness of the opposition is strongly brought out.

tion could be got; that it was expedient that means should be provided for raising all such stipends to £150 sterling; and that it appeared an annual sum of £10,000 would be sufficient for the purpose. Therefore it was enacted that every year £10,000 out of the public revenues should be set apart and appropriated, in the hands of his Majesty's receiver-general, for effecting that object. The clerks of presbyteries were instructed to make up a list of all the parishes within their respective bounds, the livings of which were under £150 a year. The Lords of Session were empowered to consider all applications for augmentation in such cases, and to grant them if they fell within the scope of the statute. Means were taken to secure that due attention should be given to every claim, and that if any parish was inadvertently placed upon the list of those to be augmented, which yet had no claim to the benefit, it should be removed from it.[1]

A very great boon was thus conferred upon the ministers of the Church of Scotland. It may be said in general that there are few of the old parishes in Scotland whose stipends are less than £150. There are many which are much higher, although the majority of the Scotch livings are of an exceedingly modest figure. But the Scottish Church can say, with some satisfaction, that if she has very few livings that may be called rich, no bishoprics worth £10,000 a year, no rectories worth £3000 or £4000, she has also no parochial charges paid with £20, £30, or £40 a year, as is frequently the case in the sister church.

It should be noted that this parliamentary annuity, of £10,000, is really the only sum for which the Church of Scotland is indebted to the public funds. It is very common to hear the detractors of the Church inveigh against the injustice of maintaining her, upon the pay of the State, while other churches have to support themselves. But this is a delusion. It cannot be too often asserted that the Church is not supported by taxes which are levied on the ratepayers. She lives upon the small remnant of ancient gifts for religious purposes remaining to her. She has been despoiled of the rich patrimony which was hers by right, when the Christian people de-

[1] 50 Geo. III. c. 84.

clared that Romanism should no longer be the religion of the country. But her slender revenues are still derived from the old church property, to which she has as good a title as any landholder in the kingdom can prefer for his broad acres. Not one farthing comes to her from the taxes levied for the public requirements. This small annuity of £10,000 is the only exception. And if all the complicated questions of Scottish ecclesiastical polity, which have arisen in these days, could be solved by the Church's sacrifice of this annuity, there would be little hesitation, and as little difficulty, in supplying the deficiency in other ways.

It may be noted, further, that of recent years it has become evident that a stipend of £150, which was regarded as a modest *minimum* eighty years ago, is now totally inadequate to meet the requirements of any parish minister. The expense of living has greatly increased since 1810, and an income barely sufficient then is wholly insufficient now. The times are so far altered that it has been deemed useless to apply to the legislature for an additional subsidy. But the Church resolved that an endeavour should be made to accomplish the same end by private liberality. It was felt that an annual stipend of £200 was the smallest upon which any clergyman should be expected to subsist. It was determined that a strenuous effort should be made to raise a capital sum, and to procure annual subscriptions sufficient to accomplish this end. A definite proposal was some years ago laid before the Church. It has been wisely guided, and has received a large measure of support. Among the many beneficent and philanthropic schemes which the Church has originated, and the carrying out of which occupies the care and energy of the wisest and most devoted of her ministers and members, there is none more needful nor more fraught with solid practical benefit alike to the Church and to the country at large, than the scheme in aid of the smaller livings of the clergy.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FROM THE DEBATES ON AUGMENTATION TO THE FORMATION OF THE PRESBYTERY OF RELIEF.

Important questions as to settlements of ministers—Doubts as to procedure, whether upon presentation or call—Progress of dissent—Perplexity of presbyteries—Their scruples to induct unacceptable presentees—Leaders begin to object to this course—Subordination of judicatories necessary—Value of patronage—Competing claims of patrons—Culross—Lanark—Dr. Dick—The Torphichen case—Presbytery refuse to induct—Adams of Falkirk—Presbytery censured—Home of Athelstaneford and Robertson of Gladsmuir—Proposal to suspend the Presbytery—Settlement by the last "Riding Committee"—Inverkeithing case—Presbytery refuse to induct presentee—Manifesto of the Moderate party—Assembly orders the presbytery to proceed—Presbytery refuse—Censured by the Assembly—Deposition of Gillespie—Presbytery of Relief.

THE mode in which ministers should be settled in vacant parishes was now a question of grave importance. There was no uniform practice. Patronage was the law, and had been so for nearly forty years; but it was so very unpopular a law that it was still often held in abeyance. Many patrons would not exercise their right. Some of them did so, but it was generally amid much obloquy. The "call" was regarded as essential to a settlement. But the dispute as to who should give the call, although it led, as we have seen, to the secession of the Erskines and their adherents, was still practically undecided. Sometimes a list or "leet," as it is now called, was furnished to the people by the patron or the presbytery, and they chose one of those named therein. Sometimes the people insisted on calling any one whom they desired. The result was that, whenever a vacancy occurred there was the greatest uncertainty as to how it should be filled up. A collision frequently ensued between the patrons and the people. Cases of disputed settlement were frequent. There were about fifty between the years 1740 and 1750.[1] Often when the people objected to a person who had been presented by the patron, there was no real cause of complaint against him; but they were irritated at not having their own choice, and resolved that at all hazards they would not allow the patron's presentee to be settled. The church courts were frequently in the greatest perplexity as to what it was right to do. Sometimes they saw

[1] Morren's "Annals of the Assembly."

that the people had no valid objection, and that the patron had only exercised his prerogative, and had done so conscientiously, and to the best of his power; but the prejudice of the people was so very strong against the presentee of the patron, that to settle him in the parish was virtually to break up the congregation. The hesitation of the church courts, and the variableness of their decisions, tended greatly to increase the evil and to multiply the number of disputed settlements. The people saw that if they only protested they would probably gain their end. Sometimes they brought their case to the Assembly, and occasionally plain working men were able to make telling speeches at the bar in defence of their own views, and fairly to carry the day against the eloquence of ministers and of advocates trained to this kind of pleading.[1] When they were successful, they generally got the power of selecting and calling the man of their own choice. When they were not successful, and the patron's presentee was settled amongst them, they frequently made overtures to the nearest Burgher or Anti-burgher presbytery, or listened to overtures made to them by these bodies, and not seldom a dissenting meeting-house and a dissenting congregation were to be found in parishes where they would never have been heard of but for these disputes. The presbyteries were greatly perplexed in such cases. Many of the ministers thought it a great sin to compel people to receive a minister whom they did not want. They declared it was against their consciences to be parties to such a tyrannical proceeding. Even when the Assembly found that the objections to a presentee were unfounded, and enjoined the presbytery to proceed to his settlement, the presbytery refused upon conscientious grounds, as they said, to obey the Assembly's command. The Assembly, as we have seen, were disposed for a time to recognize these conscientious objections of the presbyteries, and instead of forcing them to do what was repugnant to them, appointed a special committee of their own number to settle the obnoxious presentee. This was often done amid something like a riot, and a company of soldiers had occasionally to be stationed round the church to prevent the populace from forcibly interfering with the solemn services which were going forward.

[1] Cunningham's "Church History," ii. 485.

But the more sagacious leaders of church affairs began to see that this expedient was far from a healthy one. It became apparent to them that some uniform procedure must be adopted in these settlements. Even if the measures they advocated should give temporary dissatisfaction, they would be better in the long run for all parties. They began to reflect that although patronage had been imposed upon the Church against the wishes of the people, and even in a sense in violation of solemn pledges, yet the Church had never protested against it so far as to declare that, if it were continued, her connection with the State must cease. She had, indeed, again and again represented that it was a grievance, and demanded that it should be removed; but she had still retained her privileges as a State church, and had continued to do so notwithstanding this reimposition of patronage. To a certain extent, therefore, she had herself condoned the action of the State in the matter of patronage. That system was now the law of the land. It was the duty of the Church to recognize this. They were at liberty to agitate by all constitutional means for its repeal. But so long as it continued on the statute book the Church ought either to sever her connection with the State altogether, or else be prepared to carry out the provisions of this law faithfully and loyally. They saw also that it was both highly unseemly, and that it would lead to endless confusion and disaster, if the practice were persisted in of the inferior church courts declining to carry out the injunctions of the superior judicatories. If individual members of presbyteries had scruples of conscience in being parties to a settlement opposed by the people, they had done all that could be required of them, when they had appealed to the highest ecclesiastical tribunal. When the decision of that court was once given, individual members of inferior courts were no longer responsible for the consequences. For these the General Assembly was responsible. But each individual minister had solemnly vowed at his ordination that he would submit to the authority of the church courts, and if he should refuse to obey the injunction of the General Assembly, whether he might agree with it or not, he was guilty of a breach of his ordination vow. He was setting an example also of dis-

loyalty and disregard of constituted authority, which was unseemly in any one, but especially in a minister of the Gospel. He was taking the surest means, finally, to perpetuate the disorder and confusion in the affairs of the Church, which every good man must sincerely deplore. Such were the views that were beginning to force themselves upon some of the leaders in the Church. Circumstances soon arose to bring them into practical shape.

Patronage was now being exercised so frequently, and the church courts were showing so decided a disposition to recognize its lawfulness, that it began to be regarded as a valuable right. Occasionally a doubt arose as to who was the legal patron; and while a few years before this few patrons, probably, would have thought it worth while to be at the trouble and expense of vindicating their privilege, they began now to realize that it was worth contending for. Accordingly several important cases occurred, about this time, in which disputes as to who was the legal patron were decided finally by the Court of Session. The cases of Culross and of Duns were of this character; in the former of which it was ultimately found that, as the presentee had not been presented by the legal patron, he was not entitled to draw the stipend, although he had been inducted by the presbytery.[1] The case of Lanark was the most remarkable and unfortunate of these disputed presentations. Three patrons claimed the right to present—viz. the Crown, the burgh of Lanark, and Lockhart of Lee. The presbytery, finding that the Lockharts had always presented in old days, sustained their presentation and a call in favour of their presentee. But the Lockharts were apparently not popular in Lanark, and the people resolved to oppose the presentee. It was a most meaningless opposition in every other respect. Mr. Dick, the gentleman nominated, was a man of much ability and high attainments. Only four years afterwards he was translated to Edinburgh, and was known for many years as one of the most brilliant orators and most able ministers in the Church. But the feeling was so strong against him in the parish, on account of his having received a presentation from Sir Simon Lockhart, that when the pres-

[1] Morren's "Annals," i. 133–141.

bytery were about to induct him they were assailed by a mob, amongst whom were two of the bailies of the town, and compelled to desist. By desire of the synod he was ordained minister of Lanark in the Tron church of Glasgow, in order to avoid the violence of the Lanark mob. But the Crown continued to contest the right of presentation. First the Court of Session, and finally the House of Lords, found that the Crown was the rightful patron, and that although Mr. Dick was inducted to the parish, he had no right to the stipend, which belonged to the patron.[1] In point of fact Mr. Dick received no stipend at all during the four years he remained minister of Lanark. His private means, which had been better than those of most of his brethren when he entered upon the ministry, were almost entirely exhausted by the expense of the litigation in which he had been compelled to engage; and although he almost immediately rose to a position of much eminence and estimation in the Church, he felt his influence considerably diminished, throughout the whole course of his ministry, by the pecuniary hardships to which he had been subjected at the commencement of his career.[2] Cases like these made it evident that the Church could no longer evade the law of patronage, and that whatever action it chose to take must be strictly in accordance with the law of the land, if the interests of all parties were to be duly cared for.

But difficulties were multiplying. The presbyteries were contributing to these difficulties very materially, by refusing to ordain and induct the presentee of a patron, when the people objected to him, even although they had found him duly qualified, and were satisfied that the parishioners had no valid ground for refusing to receive him, and frequently even when they had been enjoined to do so by the General Assembly. The parish of Torphichen, in the presbytery of Linlithgow, having become vacant, the patron, Lord Torphichen, named a leet of five, and asked the parishioners to choose one of them. Some of the parishioners, however, had had their attention favourably directed towards Mr. James Turnbull, a probationer, and they

[1] This was the law and custom at the time; but by an Act of George III. the stipends of vacant parishes are now paid to the Widows' Fund.

[2] Morren's "Annals," i. 179, 180.

petitioned the presbytery to add his name to the patron's leet. The presbytery, however, by a majority, declined to do this.[1] When the call was "moderated," twenty-four heritors voted for Mr. James Watson, one of the gentlemen named on the leet; two heritors voted for Mr. Gilmour, another of those named. The remainder of the heritors did not vote at all, and very few of the people did so either. The presbytery were staggered when they found so small a number of the communicants signing their names to Mr. Watson's call. They referred the case to the synod. The synod, finding that there was no positive opposition, and that the more intelligent portion of the parish had called Mr. Watson; probably also having become aware that the silence of the remainder arose from their petition with reference to Mr. Turnbull not having been granted, sustained Mr. Watson's call, and ordered the presbytery to proceed to his trials. An appeal was taken to the Assembly, which sustained the finding of the synod. Mr. Watson was accordingly taken on trial, and found in every way qualified; but some of the parishioners preferred two objections,—that he could not be heard in the Church; and (the very significant one) that they never could submit to his ministry, inasmuch as he had accepted a presentation without the concurrence of almost the whole parish. Again the case came to the Assembly, and the true nature of the objections being very apparent, the presbytery were enjoined to set them aside, and to proceed to the settlement. But the presbytery, by a majority, now declined to obey the injunction of the Assembly. The case was appealed to the synod, and once more, in 1751, it came before the Assembly. This time a grave charge had to be made against the majority of the presbytery of Linlithgow. They had failed to obey the injunction of last General Assembly; they had rendered themselves liable to censure.

One of the most prominent of the presbytery, Mr. Adams, of Falkirk, who had been appointed by the previous Assembly to preside at Mr. Watson's settlement, appeared at the bar and spoke in defence of the presbytery's action. He declared that the excitement not only in the parish, but throughout the district, was so great that the members of presbytery would have

[1] Morren's "Annals," i. 157, note.

lost all influence for good in their own parishes, if they had settled Mr. Watson against the wishes of the people of Torphichen. The presbytery had conscientious objections to do so, and although the Assembly had issued an injunction, it would be nothing short of tyranny to compel the presbytery to obey it, in the face of what they sincerely believed to be their duty. He more than hinted also that there was no absolute necessity for the presbytery to be placed in so disagreeable a position, since the wishes of the Assembly could be carried out, as they had often been in similar cases, by a "riding committee."[1] But the Assembly were not persuaded by Mr. Adams' reasoning. A few, indeed, would have passed the matter over, but the great majority saw that this was now impossible. It was at once proposed that the recusant presbytery be rebuked at the bar, and that they should be enjoined to proceed to the settlement of Mr. Watson along with a large committee of the Assembly, who were empowered to act by themselves in case the presbytery should not appear.

But there was a party in the Assembly who were not satisfied that the presbytery should be allowed to escape with a simple rebuke. They felt that such disobedience was disastrous to the best interests of the Church, and they resolved that it should be checked with a firm hand. At that time the business of the Assembly was conducted in a very formal manner. No one presumed to address the house unless he was asked to do so by the moderator. But two young members were determined on this occasion to break through the rule, and to assert their own position. When the proposal for censure had been made and seconded, the minister of Athelstaneford rose, John Home, shortly afterwards to have a world-wide fame as the author of the tragedy of "Douglas." In a few brief sentences he pointed out that censure was not a sufficient punishment for the grave offence which had been committed. He moved that the disobedient members of presbytery be suspended from the exercise of their functions. Home was seconded by a young minister from the same presbytery, William Robertson, of Gladsmuir. He had never before spoken in the Assembly, and he

[1] Speech of Mr. Adams, and reasons of dissent from finding of Assembly; Morren's "Annals," i. 199–212.

was unknown to many of the members. But he had scarcely begun to speak when the clearness of his style, and the persuasiveness of his eloquence, riveted the attention of the house. He showed that the subordination of the inferior courts was necessary to the very existence of the Church, and how this contained a principle which pervaded society at large. He demonstrated the fallacy of the specious arguments put forth at the bar in opposition to this view, with such overwhelming force, that when he sat down every one felt that he was destined at no distant date to lead the councils of the Church. The motion for suspension was lost by a large majority, but it paved the way for the policy which was to regulate the Assembly's proceedings for many years to come. Mr. Watson was settled at Torphichen shortly afterwards, by the Assembly's committee. It was the last of the "riding committees," and on it are the names of John Home, William Robertson, and Hugh Blair. The presbytery do not appear to have been present, and when they next met, with Mr. Watson amongst them, some of them persisted in adding to their previous disobedience the extremely useless and uncalled-for protest that, although they consented to sit in presbytery with Mr. Watson, they did not thereby "homologate" his settlement at Torphichen.[1]

It was not long before another disputed settlement took place which gave occasion to still more decided action. Mr. Andrew Richardson, minister of the parish of Broughton, was presented to the parish of Inverkeithing by the patron, Captain Philip Anstruther. He was in all respects an excellent minister, and the people had looked favourably upon him before it became known that he was to be presented under the *régime* of patronage; but as soon as this became known a strong opposition to Mr. Richardson was organized. He had been presented by the patron, and called by a considerable number of heritors and others in the parish; but those who objected to the exercise of patronage gave a call to a Mr. William Adam, the minister of a dissenting congregation in England.[2] The presbytery which had to try the case was the Presbytery of Dunfermline, within whose bounds Mr. Ralph Erskine, the seceder, still laboured. It may be supposed that the influence of the secession had its

[1] Morren's "Annals," Torphichen case. [2] Ibid. i. 183.

own weight with them. At all events, instead of sustaining Mr. Richardson's presentation, which was clearly the only legal document before them, supported as it was by the voluntary call of a considerable proportion of the parishioners, they delayed doing so. The case was appealed to the Assembly, and by them referred to the commission, which sustained Mr. Richardson's presentation and call, and ordered the presbytery to proceed to his settlement. Instead of doing so, however, they appointed a committee to go to the parish and endeavour to ascertain how far Mr. Richardson's settlement would be acquiesced in by the parishioners. The committee inquired, and reported that some had "no light" to receive Mr. Richardson; some had declared they were not sure whether they would attend his ministry or not; and others had signified that they would do so.[1] The presbytery had courted objections, and it is surprising they received so few as they did. They, however, thought fit to decline to proceed to Mr. Richardson's settlement, as in their opinion hurtful to the interests of religion; but they hinted very significantly in their reference of the case to the commission of Assembly, that they would have not the slightest objection to the settlement being carried out by the agency of a "riding committee." A minority dissented from this finding, and professed themselves ready to obey the injunctions of the superior court.

When the case came before the commission in November, the reasons of the presbytery for refusing to induct Mr. Richardson were repelled, and the presbytery ordered to proceed to his induction forthwith. But the presbytery were not disposed to obey. Again they declined to proceed, and the case came before the commission in March. The presbytery gave their reasons for not obeying, which were very much the same as formerly. But when the commission came to consider whether the presbytery should be censured for their disobedience, they refrained from censure, and appointed the Synod of Fife to adjourn to Inverkeithing after its spring meeting, and to carry out Mr. Richardson's induction.

This resolution, however, was not come to unanimously. Robertson of Gladsmuir, Home of Athelstaneford, and several

[1] Appendix to Report on Patronage to House of Commons, p. 61.

other eminent ministers and elders, dissented from the finding. In such cases it is customary to give in written reasons of dissent. On this occasion, although it is not positively said so, there is little doubt that the reasons were drawn up by William Robertson. They must, indeed, have been hastily produced; but they bear evidence of the master-hand of the future leader of the Church, in the closely reasoned argument, and the firm grasp of fundamental principles, for which he was so famous. It shows how due subordination of the inferior to the superior is the keystone of the social fabric, the denial of which would lead to rebellion and anarchy; that this applies to the ecclesiastical quite as truly as to the civil community, and that unless a church were to be maintained by the constant exertion of miraculous agency, it cannot be dispensed with. It goes on to show that the sentence of the commission, refusing to censure the brethren of Dunfermline for their disobedience, is pre-eminently opposed to the principles of Presbyterianism as well as to every rational system of church government; and it dwells upon the danger of departing from the uniform practice of the Church, and the encouragement which undue leniency in such cases must give to those who are heedless of law and order. It shows how the commission had exceeded its powers in refusing the censure; how its deliverance was at variance with its own previous decisions in the case, and was virtually a censure upon the finding of the supreme court in the case of Torphichen, the previous year. It shows, finally, how the circumstances of the opposition in Inverkeithing afforded no ground for alarm; that there was every probability, from what had been advanced as to the state of the parish, that Mr. Richardson's settlement would, if fairly accomplished, be attended with the best results; and that, therefore, it was nothing else than an unwarrantable assertion of weakness on the part of the Church to permit the presbytery to decline the discharge of the duty to which they were called, and to devolve it upon another court.[1] These reasons of dissent were at once accepted as the manifesto of the Moderate party. They contain the clearest exposition of the just and statesmanlike prin-

[1] The reasons, which I have abridged, are given at length in Morren's "Annals," i. 231–242.

ciples which actuated that great ecclesiastical school. They are principles of church polity which must commend themselves to every unprejudiced mind, and whose firm and unwavering maintenance shed a brilliant lustre upon the names of the church leaders who for a period of more than fifty years successfully carried them out. Answers to these reasons were, of course, prepared. It is said that they were drawn up by Dr. Webster of Edinburgh, at that time the leader of the popular party. The document was doubtless intended also to serve as a manifesto in reply to that of Robertson and his friends. But its turgid and bombastic periods, its want of all grasp of fundamental principles, and its constant appeals to mere expediency, compel the reader to hesitate in accepting it as a just exposition of the popular views.

The commission's injunction to the Synod of Fife was not complied with, and the case came before the Assembly of 1752, when complaints were preferred both against the synod and the Presbytery of Dunfermline. It was now creating much excitement, for it had become evident that it must be a testing case which would virtually decide both the great questions—of the attitude of the Church towards patronage, and the power of the supreme church judicatory to enforce obedience to its deliverances. When the Assembly came to deal with it Robertson's great power in the house became at once apparent. So ably and eloquently did he expand the arguments of his "reasons of dissent" from the finding of the March commission, that the Assembly at once agreed, and without a vote, that the commission had failed rightly to discharge their duty.[1] The Presbytery of Dunfermline were then enjoined to meet at Inverkeithing on the following Thursday, and to admit Mr. Richardson to the parish. It was added that all the members of presbytery were to be present; that instead of the customary quorum of *three*, the quorum (or smallest number necessary to constitute the presbytery) should be *five;* and that each minister of the presbytery should appear at the bar of the Assembly on the day after to give account of his obedience to this injunction.[2] It has been questioned how far this latter provision was consistent with prudence. It was known that three ministers of

[1] Morren's "Annals," i. 263; Acts of Assembly, 1752. [2] Ibid.

the recusant presbytery did not approve of the action of the majority, and were ready to proceed to the induction. If the customary quorum had not been interfered with, the necessary procedure could have taken place, Mr. Richardson admitted to the parish, and the scrupulous consciences of the brethren who had hitherto stood in the way need not have been wounded. Apparently, however, it was the desire of Robertson and his friends that the policy of the Church, in such cases, should be distinctly defined, and that there should be no doubt henceforth as to the consequences of disobedience to the commands of the supreme court. It may also have seemed proper that the popular odium which, it was alleged, would certainly be visited upon the individuals who might be instrumental in admitting Mr. Richardson, should not be allowed to fall only upon the three members who were all along ready to carry out the orders of the superior courts, but should be fairly shared by those whose conduct had rendered this decisive but disagreeable exercise of authority absolutely indispensable.

When the presbytery were called to the bar of the Assembly, on the Friday, they all appeared except a small number, who tendered sufficient excuse for their absence. It was then seen that the three brethren who had originally desired to admit Mr. Richardson, and one more, who, although oppressed with grave difficulties, yet saw it to be his duty to obey the Assembly, had proceeded to Inverkeithing as directed, but not being a sufficient number to form a quorum, were unable to proceed.[1] It is alleged in a pamphlet of the day that one of the objecting presbyters had gone to Inverkeithing on the day before that fixed for Mr. Richardson's induction, and had endeavoured to persuade the leaders of the opposition to withdraw from that attitude towards the church courts; that he had partially succeeded, and there was every hope of an amicable settlement; but on the morning of the day on which the induction should have taken place, an agent despatched by some of the leaders of the popular party in Edinburgh arrived in Inverkeithing, assuring the people that the Assembly would take no further action in resisting their wishes, and that they had only to stand firm in order to secure

[1] Morren's "Annals," i. 265.

for themselves the privilege of choosing their own minister.[1] Six of the brethren gave in what they called a "humble representation," excusing themselves for not having obeyed the orders of the court. In point of fact these orders had been deliberately set aside. These six ministers, at any rate, who had failed in their duty, were clearly liable to severe censure.

The Assembly had no alternative. Unless its decisions were to be regarded henceforth as a mere form, and the best interests of the Church and society imperilled, an example must be made. The Assembly were, of course, unwilling to proceed to extreme measures. They besought the six brethren, through the moderator, to consider the position in which they were placed, and to spare their colleagues in the ministry the painful duty they should be compelled to discharge. A day was given them to reflect upon the course they ought to pursue, and to advise with their friends. Meantime it was resolved that, unless they made submission, one of their number should be deposed. They were called to the bar accordingly the next day, but they adhered tenaciously to their position. Mr. Gillespie of Carnock gave in a further representation on his own behalf, but it was not received by the Assembly, as was natural in the circumstances. Then came the question, which of the six contumacious presbyters should be sacrificed? It went to the vote. Many declined altogether to vote. But an overwhelming majority decided that the victim should be Mr. Gillespie. It is not clear why he should have been selected. He was an amiable and inoffensive man, and every one who knew him felt, that however far he may have been mistaken, he was actuated by a sense of duty. His "additional representation" was perhaps considered an aggravation of his fault, especially as he persisted in quoting from a document an allusion to which had already been pronounced an aggravation of the refusal of the brethren to comply with the orders of the Assembly.[2] Perhaps, also, the circumstances of his earlier life may have told against him, for he had deserted the Church of Scotland for a time, and had associated himself, first with the seceders, and then with

[1] "Just View of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland," quoted by Morren, "Annals," i. 262.

[2] Morren's "Annals," i. 276.

a body of English dissenters, from whom he had received license and ordination. When he was admitted at Carnock, also, he had subscribed the Confession of Faith with a reservation as to the power of the civil magistrate.[1] For whatever reason, he was, at any rate, regarded as the ringleader, and to him the penalty was meted out. When the sentence of deposition was pronounced upon him, it is recorded that he heard it with becoming gravity, and then said: "I desire to receive this sentence of the General Assembly pronounced against me with real concern and awful impressions of the Divine conduct in it; but I rejoice that to me it is given, in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." The remainder of the presbytery were once more enjoined to admit Mr. Richardson on or before the 18th of June, and in event of any of them being absent without sufficient excuse on the day appointed for the induction, they were to be suspended from their judicial functions until they expressed sorrow for their contumacy.[2] The presbytery submitted, although with a bad grace, for the minister appointed to preach the induction sermon did not appear to perform his duty, and another had to be appointed on the moment. Mr. Richardson was, however, inducted, and the opposition to him, which had really never been particularly formidable in point of numbers, soon died down.[3]

When Gillespie was deposed he preached for a time in the open air and in temporary places of worship. He seems to have hoped that he would be speedily restored. A movement was made in the Assembly of 1753 to this effect. It appeared, however, that he had not himself applied for restoration, and the Assembly felt themselves precluded from considering the proposal until he should do so. He does not seem to have felt himself at liberty to make such an application, and he continued till the close of his life to preach in his meeting-house at Dunfermline. In 1769, and again in 1770, proposals were made to the Assembly to remove the sentence of deposition. It is not surprising, however, that they were on both occasions rejected, for Mr. Gillespie had unquestionably defied the Assembly in continuing to preach notwithstanding

[1] Morren's "Annals," i. 276. [2] Acts of Assembly, 1752.
[3] "A Just View of the Constitution of the Church," &c.

his deposition, and he had not signified personally that he desired to re-enter the Church. He did not, however, attach himself to the seceders; but nine years after his deposition, in 1761, in conjunction with two other ministers, he formed the Presbytery of Relief. His colleagues in this step were a Mr. Collier, an English dissenter who had been invited to set up a meeting house in Colinsburgh, where a minister was settled in the parish whom the parishioners did not think fit to accept; and Thomas Boston, son of Boston of Ettrick, who in similar circumstances had opened a meeting house in Jedburgh. They met at Colinsburgh on the 22nd of October, and constituted the presbytery. In process of time the sect grew into considerable importance. It was at first, and for many years, a refuge for those who felt patronage a grievance. Gradually its adherents adopted the "Voluntaryism" professed by the majority of Scottish dissenters, and the body was absorbed in the union which eventually formed the United Presbyterian Church. Gillespie himself retained to the last a strong affection for the Church of Scotland, and when he was dying he advised his congregation to seek re-admission to it. Some time afterwards they were re-admitted accordingly.

The policy pursued by the leaders of the Church of Scotland in this case has often been severely criticised. It has been characterized as tyrannical and despotic. It has been charged with creating the evil of a second secession in the Church of Scotland, and with indefinitely multiplying the adherents of dissent. Some have even gone further, and have hinted in unambiguous terms that the promoter of such a policy, however eminent in the walks of literature and influential in the church courts, must have been ignorant of the fundamental principles of evangelical truth;[1] for there is a class of religionists who, while they profess the broadest liberality of Christian sentiment, are capable, strange to say, of entertaining the most uncharitable opinions of those who do not agree with them on every point, even of rational expediency. That the schism in the Church occasioned by Gillespie's deposition was much to be regretted, must be admitted by every one. That so amiable and godly a man should have been subjected to the extremest censures

[1] See Hetherington's "Church History," 672, 673.

of the Church he loved, cannot fail to excite sentiments of sympathy and sorrow. But in such circumstances as those in which she was placed at the time, the Church had a duty to discharge, which she could not set aside.

However repugnant the law of patronage may have been to the feelings of the community, the rights of the Christian people were recognized and protected under it. They were entitled to take every constitutional means to have the obnoxious law repealed. In the meantime they had ample opportunity of stating and proving any valid objection to the minister whom it was proposed to settle amongst them, with the assurance that all just objections would be sustained by the church courts. The people were now beginning to demand that the mere expression of their dissatisfaction should have the same effect as a satisfactorily vouched cause of objection. They were encouraged, in this irrational course, by the action of those churchmen who refused to recognize in all cases the authority of their supreme court. Had this pernicious tendency been permitted to prevail, law and order would, ere long, have been systematically set at defiance within the Church. But, under the sagacious guidance of Robertson and his friends, the Church had now realized the issue that was before her. It was an irksome task to withstand the popular clamour, which justified itself by the declaration that it was raised on behalf of spiritual interests; and it was painful to condemn the conduct of men whose personal worth was universally admitted. The temptation was great to continue to wink at the insubordination which was so constantly exhibited. The Church had to choose between the discharge of duty and the sentimentalism which would have soon resulted in her crumbling into ruins. If her devotion to the course she saw to be right alienated many upon whose sympathy she ought to have been able to rely, and if it strengthened an opposition which she deplored, she had nevertheless the satisfaction of knowing that those who departed from her pale were such as were unable to discern wherein, in such a crisis, the true principles of rectitude consist, and that the sacrifices she was called to make were made in the maintenance of the sacred prerogatives of order and of law.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FROM THE PUBLICATION OF "DOUGLAS" TO THE STRICT ASSERTION OF THE LAW OF PATRONAGE.

Literary revival—Tragedy of "Douglas"—Carlyle of Inveresk—William Robertson—Scepticism and its opponents—David Hume—Lord Kames—Prosecution threatened by the church courts—Abandoned—Hume's "Essay on Miracles"—Answered by Principal Campbell—Dr. Thomas Reid—"Inquiry into the Human Mind"—Philosophy of common sense—Dr. Beattie—"Essay on Truth"—"Minstrel"—Edinburgh Divines—Principal Robertson—History of Scotland—Dr. Hugh Blair—Contrast to preachers of the Covenant—Lectures on rhetoric—Dr. John Erskine—Evangelical preaching—Moderate policy—Call not essential to a settlement—Objections limited to life and doctrine—Patronage regarded as a benefit by Moderate party—Progress of dissent—Overture on schism—Debate in the Assembly—Robertson's system in judicial procedure—The Presbytery of Relief—Attempts of Relief ministers to retain connection with the Church—Bain of Paisley—Disputed settlements—Reflections.

TURNING from the more serious questions of the day to those of passing interest, we are at once arrested by the commotion which arose on the publication of the tragedy of "Douglas," by John Home, of Athelstaneford. It will be remembered that it was this gentleman who took the initiative in the inauguration of the Moderate policy in the General Assembly, although his unpretending utterances were completely eclipsed by the eloquence of the seconder of his motion, Mr. William Robertson. It was not imagined at the time that he possessed talents of a very different order from those which were adapted to the deliberations of church courts. Having composed his tragedy, Home tried to get it brought on the stage in London, but being discouraged by Garrick, he yielded to the solicitations of his friends, and arranged that it should be performed in the Edinburgh playhouse. It is said, although not on very good authority, that previous to its public performance there was a private rehearsal of the piece, in which the characters were sustained by some of the leading clergymen and lawyers of the day. Probably it was nothing more than a reading, if it took place at all.[1] When the night of the public performance arrived the theatre was crowded with the citizens of Edinburgh, curious to see the play of which they had already heard so much, and to learn how a country minister could handle

[1] Chambers' "Lives of Illustrious Scotsmen," art. "Rev. John Home."

tragedy. Several of Home's clerical friends were present, although at the risk of their reputation. Some of them tried to conceal themselves, but in a prominent position sat the celebrated Alexander Carlyle, minister of Inveresk, one of the best known churchmen of his day, whose splendid presence had gained for him the appellation of "Jupiter Carlyle." As the play proceeded, some one near the doctor's seat, under the influence of liquor, created a disturbance, upon which he was promptly ejected by the portly divine.

The narrow notions of the day were greatly scandalized by the whole proceeding. It mattered not that the piece was one of indisputable merit. It was written for the purpose of being represented on the stage, and the theatre was, in those days, regarded by all who considered themselves well-conditioned Scotsmen as little better than the synagogue of Satan. The city of Edinburgh was in a tumult of delight that so admirable a drama should have been produced by a Scotsman, and should have received its *imprimatur* there. But the religious society, or what was known as such, was shocked beyond measure, and the church courts felt themselves called upon to interfere. The Presbytery of Edinburgh published an "admonition and exhortation" to all within their bounds, denouncing theatricals.[1] They summoned the minister of Liberton to their bar, who pleaded that although he had gone to the theatre he had done so only once, and had tried to conceal himself in a corner. He was suspended for three weeks for his offence.[2] Not satisfied with this, the presbytery thought it incumbent on them to report the names of all the ministers who, they had heard, were present at the play, to their respective presbyteries, that they might be similarly dealt with. Most of these clerical delinquents made excuses which were accepted, and the matter was allowed to be forgotten. The Presbytery of Duns rebuked two of their members who had been in the theatre when the play was brought out; but they wrote to the Presbytery of Edinburgh disputing their right to animadvert upon the conduct of ministers not within their own bounds, and telling them in effect to mind their own affairs.[3] The principal offender—

[1] Morren's "Annals," ii. 112–114. [2] Ibid., 115.
[3] The letter is given by Morren, "Annals," ii. 119.

if offender he could be called—Mr. Home, was at once proceeded against by the Presbytery of Haddington. But the process was brought to a speedy termination by Home's resignation of his charge. He seems to have been unwilling to undergo the annoyance and expense of protracted litigation; probably also he could see that it was not likely to terminate in his favour. On Sunday, 5th June, 1757, he preached a farewell sermon to his people in Athelstaneford, which we are told "drew tears from many." On the 7th he gave in his demission to the Presbytery of Haddington, which was at once accepted.[1] He removed to London, where he addicted himself chiefly to literary pursuits. But he retained his affection for the Church of Scotland, and having obtained the appointment of Conservator of Scots privileges at Campvere, with a civil list pension of considerable amount, he was for years a conspicuous figure in the General Assembly, where he sat as representative elder from Campvere. On State occasions he invariably appeared in official robes, and with cocked hat and sword.[2]

The brunt of the storm was sustained by the minister of Inveresk. The Presbytery of Dalkeith resolved to proceed against him by libel, notwithstanding his own protest that it was a matter to be dealt with in a simpler manner, and notwithstanding the petition of some of his elders, showing the esteem in which he was held in his parish for his great ability and his works of charity, and praying that the cause of offence should be dealt with in a more brotherly way than by libel. The libel was found relevant and partly proven, and it was referred to the higher courts, as a sentence from them would have more weight than from the presbytery. The synod, however, disapproved of the procedure of the presbytery in having insisted on a libel, being of opinion that a brotherly admonition would have been sufficient in the circumstances. They, however, expressed their high displeasure with Mr. Carlyle for going to the theatre, and strictly enjoined him to abstain from doing so in all time to come. Carlyle acquiesced in this finding, and declared his regret at having given offence to his brethren, and his resolution to do so no more. A minority of

[1] Morren's "Annals," ii. 118.
[2] See dissertation on "The Church in its Relation to the Law and the State."

the synod, however, who desired a more severe sentence, appealed to the General Assembly, where the sentence of the synod was affirmed by a large majority.[1] The process does not appear to have materially affected Carlyle's influence. Three years afterwards he was appointed by the Assembly to preach before the Lord High Commissioner, and in 1789 he was all but appointed principal clerk of the Assembly, an apparent majority having been in his favour, until on a close scrutiny it was found that his opponent had gained by a very few votes.

The whole of these proceedings is a curious example of how public opinion is liable to change, even upon the great questions of right and wrong. Carlyle was at once opposed and supported in this matter by some of the leading men of the day. Blair and Robertson both defended him, and the pleadings of the latter had all the more weight that he had not himself been a transgressor. In deference to the claims of public opinion, and to what he deemed due to his sacred profession, he abstained altogether from frequenting the playhouse.[2] Probably no such prosecution would now-a-days be possible. At that time the accessories of the drama were frequently so objectionable as to justify the suspicion with which it was regarded. That it is improved in this respect is matter for rejoicing, for there is no more powerful enforcement of morality than is to be found in its higher types. Let us hope that the improvement in the tone of the stage is, in all respects, so great as to warrant the altered attitude of public opinion towards it.

Home was not the only writer in the ranks of the Church of Scotland who enriched the literature of the country. The period at which we have arrived was remarkable for the number of illustrious men whom she could rank amongst her ministers. It was the Augustan age of her history. If the drama was a forbidden field, there were other fields of literature which might be cultivated to any extent. It was now nearly twenty years since David Hume first began to publish those metaphysical speculations which, at the age of twenty-five, had raised him to the foremost place amongst the philosophers of the day. Personally Hume was a man of scrupulous integrity, and from his great amiability and attractive conversational powers

[1] Morren's "Annals," ii. 129. [2] Dugald Stewart's "Life of Robertson."

he was much esteemed in the literary circles of the Scottish metropolis. Following out the speculations of Locke and of Berkeley he had shown in his "Treatise of Human Nature" that man can have no knowledge of anything, beyond his own ideas and impressions. He afterwards more fully developed his philosophical scepticism, in various writings, not more distinguished for profound thought than for the artistic language in which his ideas were conveyed. But he had carried his scepticism into the sphere of religion, and in his famous "Essay on Miracles," as well as in his "Natural History of Religion," he not only expresses doubts as to the solidity of the foundations upon which the system of natural theology must be reared, but advocates, and in his own view demonstrates, that "no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavours to establish." Hume had been, to some extent, followed in his sceptical tendencies by the celebrated Lord Kames, who, although he repudiated the religious scepticism which Hume professed, and was in fact an office-bearer in the Church, was a man of too vigorous and independent a mind to be restrained in his speculations by the trammels of orthodoxy.

His writings and those of Hume excited the anger of some zealous defenders of the faith, and they were brought under the notice of the General Assembly, which passed an Act expressing deep concern at the prevalence of infidelity and immorality, and enjoining ministers to be careful to guard their flocks against their contagion.[1] A pamphlet appeared directly after the rising of the court, in defence of Hume and Lord Kames, which was generally supposed to be the composition of Dr. Hugh Blair, at that time at the zenith of his fame as a preacher, and the warm personal friend of both the philosophers. It was followed by others in reply, and it was broadly asserted that the Act of the Assembly was not sufficient in the circumstances. An attempt was made to revive the question in the Assembly of 1756, and a prosecution was commenced against Hume before the Presbytery of Edinburgh. But both in the Assembly and in the presbytery the opinion prevailed that it would do

[1] Acts of Assembly, 1755.

no real good to denounce or excommunicate any man for speculative opinions, and that the true way to neutralize their evil tendency was to meet them in argument. The philosophers were accordingly spared all censure; in which the Church did wisely. But the answer was not readily forthcoming. The "Essay on Miracles" is unquestionably one of the most perfect pieces of reasoning in the language, and few were disposed to enter the lists with its author.

At length, in 1762, the weak point in the argument was detected and exposed by Principal Campbell, of Marischal College, Aberdeen, one of the ablest men whom the Church of Scotland has produced. Hume had argued that belief depends upon experience, and that as a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature, which universal experience has declared inviolable, the proof against a miracle from the very nature of the fact is conclusive. In opposition to this Principal Campbell replied that testimony has a natural and original influence upon belief, antecedent to all experience, and consequently that Hume's argument is based upon false premises. He illustrates and defends his position with much ingenuity and skill; and the treatise had no sooner appeared than it was admitted, on all hands, that the illustrious philosopher, who had for so long been regarded as invincible, had at length received a reply which he would find it difficult to repel.[1] It is pleasant to think that the controversy, although upon so vital a topic, was conducted in the most friendly and charitable spirit. Dr. Campbell submitted his manuscript to Hume through their mutual friend Dr. Blair, fearful lest he should have in any degree misunderstood the argument or misinterpreted it. Hume was not slow to express his sense both of the ability of his opponent's performance, and of the courtesy which characterized it. It is evident that he must have seen that the ground of his argument had been shaken, for he professes his strong inclination to reply, which, but for a resolution he had formed early in his literary career, he would probably have done.

Dr. Campbell was not the only opponent of Hume in Aberdeenshire. Dr. Thomas Reid, while minister of New Machar,

[1] The argument on both sides is admirably summarized by Principal Cunningham, "Hist." ii. 516–519.

was maturing his philosophical views, although he devoted himself with no less zeal and energy to the duties of his parish. His case is one of those numerous instances of the mistakes into which the people are apt to fall as regards the election of ministers. His settlement at New Machar was rudely opposed, owing to the antipathy of the people to the exercise of patronage; but when he was translated to the chair of philosophy in Aberdeen fifteen years afterwards, so greatly had he endeared himself to his parishioners that they followed him with their blessings and their tears. "We fought against Mr. Reid when he came," said an old man, "and we would have fought for him when he went away."[1] In 1764 he published his celebrated "Inquiry into the Human Mind." In this he controverted the idealism of Bishop Berkeley and the scepticism of Hume, and endeavoured to establish a system of philosophy on the principles of "common sense," or, as it is better expressed, in the *communis sensus* of man. He also, in his desire to conduct the controversy in a proper spirit, submitted the manuscript of his work to Hume, likewise by the intervention of Dr. Blair. It is said that when Blair at first proposed to Hume that he should examine Dr. Reid's work before it should be published, he replied somewhat tartly that he "wished the parsons would confine themselves to their old occupation of worrying one another, and leave philosophers to argue with temper, moderation, and good manners."[2] When he had read it, however, he wrote to Dr. Reid acknowledging warmly the excellence of the performance. Dr. Reid, as is well known, succeeded Adam Smith, the author of the "Wealth of Nations," in the chair of moral philosophy at Glasgow. His system was widely accepted, and he is generally recognized as the founder of what is known as the Scottish school of metaphysics.

By and by yet another champion of orthodoxy appeared upon the scene in the person of Dr. Beattie, Dr. Reid's successor in Marischal College. His work, which was entitled an "Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth," was published six years after the "Inquiry into the Human Mind." It is more suited to the popular taste than Dr. Reid's work, although it deals with the same subject—viz. the scepticism of

[1] Cunningham's "History," ii. 520. [2] Ibid. ii. 521.

Hume. It attained its end. It had an immense sale, and it brought down the important truths, which both its author and Dr. Reid intended to promulgate, to the level of capacities to which the work of the latter was practically useless. Dr. Beattie reaped substantial reward from his labours, in the shape of a valuable pension. He obtained much notoriety in England, and was even offered preferment in the English Church, which he had the good sense to decline. His philosophical works, however, have not stood the test of time as have those of Dr. Reid, and it is more for his poetry that he is remembered than for his elaborate prose works. His "Minstrel" is still read with pleasure, and will never cease to be held in esteem by all lovers of the muse.

It was not only in the remoter districts that the Church could point to great men within her pale. While Campbell, Reid, and Beattie, were shedding their lustre upon the granite city where they had their abode, a galaxy no less famous was adorning the capital itself. It is not often that one epoch can boast of such names as Robertson, Blair, and Erskine. Robertson had been transferred to the metropolis in 1758, and was appointed principal of the university in 1762. He had published his "History of Scotland" in 1759, by which his fame as a great historian was at once established. He was now the acknowledged leader of the Moderate party, and his influence was all the more weighty from the splendour of his literary reputation. Dr. Blair was one of the first to introduce a polished and classical mode of preaching into the Church. The discourses of the Covenanting period had been declamatory and loose, although full of fire and vigour. The sermons of the succeeding period abounded, for the most part, in numerous subdivisions and formal "uses," as the practical applications were called. Dr. Blair's acquaintance with the best models of English composition, and with the finer types of classical writing, seems to have suggested to him the idea of adapting their amenities to the requirements of the pulpit. His discourses fascinated the congregations that crowded his church, and delighted the much wider circle to whom they were addressed when they were published; although it is possible that a more fastidious taste than that

which then prevailed may pronounce them deficient in the power of pointed address so necessary to arrest a congregation; while such as desire the higher qualities in the subject-matter of pulpit oratory may find that not a few of the discourses, which gained so much applause, are wanting in this respect. Dr. Blair's lectures upon rhetoric, which he delivered in the University of Edinburgh, with much acceptance for many years, are probably a more enduring monument of his fame than the sermons. They formed one of the first efforts, in modern times, to reduce the science of speaking and writing to a system; and for exhaustive discussion of first principles, and effective illustration of the true methods of writing and of oratory, they have perhaps never been surpassed.

As a preacher, Dr. John Erskine, Robertson's colleague in the Old Greyfriars Church, may be reckoned as in some respects the foremost of his day. His style lacked the grace and finish so conspicuous in Dr. Blair, and his manner in the pulpit, according to the well-known description of him in "Guy Mannering," was somewhat ungainly. But he was one of the most deeply read theologians of the period. He was in close and constant communication with some of the greatest divines in England and America. He was also a man of fervent piety, and he preached evangelical doctrine with an earnestness and power which rendered him a commanding influence in the religious society of the metropolis.

The effect of Dr. Robertson's leadership of the Moderate party was to consolidate the policy which acted upon the principle that the law of patronage must be recognized. Previous to his assuming the reins of power, and under the guidance of Dr. Cumin, the necessity of a "call" had been recognized by both parties. The only difference between them was that the popular party required a call from the heads of families in the parish, while the Moderate party were satisfied if it came from the heritors and elders. But as Dr. Robertson gradually matured his policy, he became convinced that the call was not necessary to the validity of a settlement. In the existing state of the law, he held that the Church was bound to admit any qualified presentee. The call was in his opinion a seemly expression of good will on the part of the people, but it was not essential.

In some cases he proposed that the phrase "concurrence" should be substituted for that of "call," as expressing more accurately the attitude towards the new minister which the instrument in question was designed to indicate.[1] As regards the objections to be urged against a presentee, he also found it necessary to set a limit to their character. Hitherto, in the effort to oppose such persons as were not acceptable, the parishioners had been allowed to prefer any objections they thought fit. The result was that in many cases they were irrelevant, occasionally even grotesque; and the time of the courts was wasted in considering them, while their very statement tended to lower the dignity of the Church. Dr. Robertson contended that the objections must be limited to the life or doctrine of the presentee. These were fairly the subjects of inquiry and animadversion, and should be sustained if they were made good; but the settlement of a minister over a parish was a matter too sacred to be the subject of offensive allegations, which were certain to be repelled in the court of final appeal, but which produced the worst possible effect while they were current. In short, it may be said that Dr. Robertson's great object was to enforce that reverence for law which he held to be the duty of all right-thinking men, and especially of those who professed their adherence to the principles of the Gospel. The progress of events convinced him, and those who acted along with him, that patronage, so far from being an evil, was a benefit to the Church, an opinion in which even the popular party at this time concurred.[2] But even if it had been otherwise he would doubtless have pursued the course he had adopted, from regard to the sacredness which he always discerned in the action of constituted authority.

While this policy was unquestionably founded upon sound principles, it was difficult to persuade the people at large to acquiesce in it. They were impressed with the idea that they were subjected to a grievous wrong, whenever a presentation was issued by a patron. The sentiments propounded by the leaders of the popular party tended to perpetuate this impression, and to encourage them in their opposition. Probably sufficient care was not taken by the Moderate party to expound

[1] Moncrieff's "Life of Dr. J. Erskine," Appendix. [2] Ibid.

their own principles. There were few or no facilities in those days for spreading such information as was required; and the importance of educating the people by frequent explanation of the reason of their action, and showing them its propriety, was not sufficiently realized. The necessity for training preachers who should attract the public ear, by the popularity of their preaching, was also overlooked. For while the Moderate party was fully justified in discouraging that spurious oratory which seeks merely to please while it makes no effort to edify, it would have merited universal approbation had it been more solicitous to send out youthful ministers fully equipped, not only as learned and orthodox, but also as powerful and attractive, preachers of the Gospel. This, however, was too much disregarded, to the no small detriment of the Church.

The uniform procedure which was now adopted had the effect of discouraging the opposition to the presentees of patrons, which had been so common for a time. But dissatisfaction continued to prevail. Sometimes, when the Assembly ordered a presentee to be settled, the mob rose, and with tumult and violence prevented the presbytery from discharging their duty. Oftener, when there was no open violence, the people followed the example which had now become common—they erected a meeting-house in the parish, and joined the ranks of dissent. It was not more than a generation ago since Erskine and his friends had been deposed, and already there was about a hundred and twenty dissenting congregations. The friends of the Church grew alarmed. If this defection should go on, the Church must soon be materially weakened. The matter was brought before the Assembly of 1765, and a committee was appointed to consider the subject, and to report to next Assembly. The popular party regarded this as a good opportunity for another assault upon patronage, and they mustered their forces for this purpose in the Assembly of 1766. But the Moderates were equal to the occasion.

Principal Robertson, who took a leading part in the debate, sketched the history of patronage in the Church of Scotland. He showed that it had had a highly beneficial effect upon the ministers of the Church. He declared that at the Revolution, and for some years afterwards, the ministers were men of but

slender abilities, and of narrow views, although they were pious and earnest. He pointed out that directly after the Act of Queen Anne was passed, young men of a higher stamp began to prepare for the ministry, that the character of the clergy had gradually improved, and that it had never been higher than now. The popular side also produced their customary arguments: that schism was increasing, and whole parishes were abandoning the Church when an obnoxious settlement took place—that patrons were regarding their rights as a species of property, and not using them for the benefit of the people—that simony was barely concealed—that if the people were unreasonable, patrons were unreasonable too, and often unnecessarily thrust a man upon a parish in wanton defiance of the wishes of the parishioners—that if the people became indifferent to the appointment of their ministers, they would become indifferent to religion also. The vote resulted in the triumph of the Moderate party; and the report, which had recommended inquiry into the growth of schism, and whether no remedy could be found for the abuse of patronage, was not adopted. The agitation was continued for a time in the public prints, and an attempt was made to revive the Act on Calls, which had called forth the wrath of Erskine, and driven him from the Church. The popular party had greatly modified its views—shall we not say, had learned wisdom?—when it could now be contented, as it would have been, with the Act which it scorned only thirty years before.[1]

The policy which Robertson inaugurated included a consistent system of judicial procedure, and a close attention to legal form in its prosecution. So convinced was he of the necessity of this in the doings of a regularly constituted court of the country, that he would have preferred that a delinquent should escape even upon technical grounds, rather than that there should be the slightest departure from the forms, which were indispensable to strict and impartial administration of justice. Some cases of this kind did occur about this period, which the opponents of the Principal endeavoured to allege arose from a culpable disregard, on his part, of the morality of the Church. The truth is that Dr. Robertson's policy in

[1] Morren's "Annals," ii. 329–346.

these judicial cases, and that which was carried out by his successors, tended more than any other movement to establish the Church in the eyes of the country as the bulwark of justice. There is always a tendency in a large and fluctuating body like the General Assembly to yield to previous impressions, and to approach the trial of a judicial case with views already formed and minds made up. The strict forms are apt to be overlooked, and legal proof is apt to be dispensed with when a large body of men, unaccustomed in many instances to weigh evidence, are obliged to proceed to the dispensation of justice. Dr. Robertson enforced principles of the very opposite character. He regarded the church courts as no less bound by their own forms, and by the general laws which regulate evidence, than the civil and criminal tribunals of the country. So thoroughly was he impressed with this salutary conviction, and so earnestly did he seek to impress its soundness upon the church courts, that he succeeded in establishing a code of precedents which regulated the action of the Assembly in these cases for many years, and made it evident to the public that the ecclesiastical decisions could be depended on for their impartiality, with as much certainty as could the findings of the Court of Session, or the verdicts of the High Court of Justiciary.

Although the secession from the Church had now assumed large proportions, a considerable section of those who had seceded still cherished warm feelings towards her. The first seceders indeed, the successors of the Erskines and their friends, stood sternly apart, and would have no communing with the Establishment. But it was otherwise with many who had attached themselves to the Presbytery of Relief. They seem to have, in some cases, imagined that they might adhere to that body, without severing their connection with the mother church. All that they aimed at was, as their name imported, to afford relief to such as could not endure the yoke of patronage. It was a curious position to occupy, but there were definite instances of it.

The people of Bothwell were dissatisfied with a settlement which had taken place in the parish. They left the church, and called a Mr. Simson, a licentiate of the Presbytery of Paisley, to be their minister. Simson accepted the call, was ordained

by Gillespie and the Presbytery of Relief, and proceeded to exercise his ministry in Bothwell. Some of the parish ministers looked upon him as one of themselves, and admitted him to ministerial fellowship. But others recognized the irregularity of which he had been guilty, and he was brought before the Presbytery of Paisley. He argued that he was only affording relief to certain dissatisfied parishioners of Bothwell, and that he was thereby strengthening instead of weakening the Church, to which he still desired to adhere. The presbytery gave no decision, but the commission declared him no longer a minister of the Church.[1]

The minister of the High Church, Paisley, a Mr. Bain, resigned his parish and accepted a call to a Relief congregation in Edinburgh. He stated, however, in his letter of resignation, that he had made no change in his principles, and that he retained his cordial regard for the constitution and interests of the Church of Scotland, which he had solemnly engaged to defend and support, more than thirty years before, as he would continue to do while he lived. The case came up to the Assembly of 1766, by a reference from the Presbytery of Paisley, who were at a loss what to do in the matter. The Assembly had very slight difficulty. It was sufficiently clear that Mr. Bain wished, in this manner, to evade the policy of the Church as to patronage, and yet remain within her bounds. Divisive courses such as these were quite as inconsistent with sound policy as the insubordination of the inferior courts. The Assembly unanimously declared Mr. Bain no longer a minister of the Church, and by a large majority forbade their own ministers to employ him, or to be employed by him, in the exercise of ministerial offices. Mr. Bain bitterly resented this sentence. In a pamphlet published shortly after it was pronounced, he inveighs against its injustice with more warmth than candour.

The Moderates have been criticised for this, as for many more of their doings. Yet it is difficult to see what other course could have been adopted. It was impossible to recognize the Relief meeting-houses as chapels of ease to the parish churches. They were put down without consent of the church

[1] Morren's "Annals," ii. 292–294.

courts, in consequence of decisions which virtually declared that the additional church accommodation was not required. In most cases it was not, but for the discontent of the people, which was frequently unreasonable. The church courts had no jurisdiction whatever, either over the people who had separated from the parish church, or the minister whom they thought fit to call. It is possible that the Church might have shown more solicitude to reconcile the people, by instructing them in the principles which guided these decisions, and striving to remove their prejudices. But, however much their separation is to be regretted, it is out of the question to suppose that any arrangement could be come to, by which the separatists could at once dissociate themselves from the Church and yet remain connected with her.

The disputed settlements, which occurred at this time, afford a very melancholy indication of the manner in which bitter and acrimonious feeling could show itself in connection with our holy religion, and how it could be condoned as an evidence of extreme conscientiousness and high-toned spirituality. A Mr. Clark had been presented to Eaglesham by the patron. He was disliked apparently for this very reason. When the call was moderated in, only one of the ordinary parishioners signed it. Mr. Clark passed all his trials with approbation. The presbytery found him fully qualified to take charge of the parish; but knowing the opposition to him, they delayed appointing a day for his ordination, from one meeting to another. Each delay fomented the opposition, and encouraged the people to fancy that they should ultimately be allowed to elect their own minister. When the presbytery at length resolved to induct Mr. Clark, they were met, as they approached the village, by a furious mob armed with stones and sticks, with which they violently assaulted their spiritual superiors, flinging dirt and garbage at them, uttering at the same time the most hideous oaths, until the presbytery had to take refuge in a house in the village, and were compelled to desist from their solemn duty. Ultimately Mr. Clark was settled upon the peremptory injunction of the Assembly.[1]

In 1762 the Duke of Hamilton presented a Mr. Wells to the

[1] Report on Patronage to the House of Commons, Appendix.

parish of Shotts. The people did not sign his call, and it was known that they objected to the presentee. The only objection which was formally brought forward, however, was found to be quite untenable. The presbytery nevertheless sympathized with the people, and upon various pretexts they delayed taking Mr. Wells on trials. When they at last did so they protracted for months the process which was usually completed at one or two sittings. Finally, they declared that Mr. Wells' attainments were poor, although they did not find him disqualified. The Assembly ordered them to repeat the trials, which they did with similar dilatoriness. Again they found the attainments imperfect. On an appeal the Assembly took the trials themselves, and found the presentee fully qualified. There was now no excuse for further delay. Six years had already passed. But when the presbytery at length proceeded to Shotts, to ordain the presentee, they were in their turn encountered by a violent mob, which prevented them from approaching the church, and compelled them to return without accomplishing their purpose. The sheriff of the county afterwards intimated to the presbytery that he would protect them with the military, when next they fixed a day for the induction. But the presbytery thought fit rather to conduct the service in private at Hamilton. They appointed a minister to preach and conduct the service, but he did not appear upon the day fixed, having written to say that he was indisposed, and Mr. Wells was set apart to the holy office without the usual offices having been engaged in at all.

A still more painful case was that of St. Ninians. The minister of the neighbouring parish of Gargunnock, a Mr. Thomson, had received a presentation from the patron. He was an able man, and had previously done good service in the Church,[1] but he was somewhat advanced in years. The people were anxious to choose their own minister, and resolved to have a Mr. Mackie.[2] They declined, therefore, to receive Mr. Thomson, although they could bring no valid objection. The presbytery showed unmistakable signs of sympathy with

[1] See address of Mr. Finlay at his induction, quoted by Struthers, "Hist. of Scot." ii. 611.

[2] Ochtertyre MSS., 553.

the people, and the litigation lasted for about seven years. At last the Assembly adopted peremptory measures, and enjoined the presbytery to induct the presentee. They met accordingly on the 29th of July, 1773. Several members were absent, although they had all been enjoined to attend under pain of censure. The minister of Dollar, Mr. Finlay, had volunteered to preside. After prayer, in which he asked no blessing upon the purpose for which they were met, and without preaching the customary sermon, he proceeded at once to address the presentee. "We are met here this day," he said, "in obedience to the sentence of the General Assembly, to admit you minister of St. Ninians. There has been a formidable opposition made against you by six hundred heads of families, sixty heritors, and all the elders except one. This opposition has been continued for seven years, and if you shall be this day admitted you can have no pastoral relation to the souls of this parish: you will never be regarded as the shepherd to go before the sheep: they know you not, and will not follow you. Your admission can only be regarded as a sinecure, and yourself as a stipend lifter. Instead of doing good, you will bring ruin and desolation upon the parish, and be able to adopt the answer of Marius to the Roman prætor—'Go, tell him that thou hast seen the exiled Marius sitting upon the ruins of Carthage.' Now, sir, I conjure you by the mercy of God, give up this presentation; I conjure you, by the great number of souls in St. Ninians, who are like sheep going astray without a shepherd to lead them, and will never hear you, never submit to you, give it up; and I conjure you, by that grace which you would wish to have in a dying hour, and that awful and impartial account which in a little time you must give to God of your own soul, and of the souls of this parish, before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ, give it up!" "I forgive you for what you have now said," replied Mr. Thomson, "may God forgive you. Proceed to execute the orders of your superiors."[1]

Nothing could give us a more vivid idea of the manner in which some of the ministers of the Church encouraged the people, in the disastrous attempt to disregard the law of the

[1] *Scots Magazine*, 1773.

land, than this scene. No circumstances could justify the conduct of the moderator. He had been appointed to discharge a solemn duty by the courts which had been set over him in the providence of God. He had sworn that he would implicitly obey the orders of these courts. Yet, with a feint of obedience to a finding which had been arrived at after the most grave deliberation, he had availed himself of the position in which he was placed to pronounce, upon his own authority, what was practically a censure, alike upon the presentee, whose conduct had been sanctioned by the Assembly, and upon the Assembly itself. Under a pretext of conscientious conviction, and a regard for high spiritual interests, he had done his best to render the difficulties already in the way of the presentee insuperable, and the exercise of a Gospel ministry by the man whom the Church had seen it right to settle in the parish utterly abortive. It was little wonder that when such cases were occurring frequently, the more sagacious of the church leaders, and the more prudent amongst the laity, began to see that patronage was after all by no means the grievance it was represented to be, if its systematic and conscientious exercise should put a stop to such unseemly displays on the part of the people, and should gradually introduce into the ministry of the Church an element of common sense, which should be able to discriminate what measures were really for the good of the country, and to resist the pressure of mere popular clamour. It may be said that the duty of an opposed presentee was to abandon his legal claim to a parish where opposition was strong. Most men would probably have consulted their own comfort, and done so without hesitation. Perhaps few men could have so thorough a confidence in their own strength of character as to feel justified in persevering. But neither the requirements of Christian charity nor the claims of common sense permit us to judge harshly of those who thought fit to persevere. The Church was maintaining, in the face of much obloquy, the solemn sanctions of law and order. The men who saw it to be their duty to lend their aid in the great contest are not to be regarded as objects of opprobrium.

CHAPTER XXIX.

FROM THE DISCUSSIONS ON CREEDS (1773) TO THE END OF THE CENTURY.

Law of patronage established — Peace in the Church — Creeds — Penal laws against Catholics—Repealed in England and Ireland—Proposal to repeal them in Scotland —Popular panic—Riots in Edinburgh and Glasgow—Debate in the Assembly—Bill withdrawn—First opposition to "pluralities," 1779—Robertson retires from the Assembly—His character—Anti-patronage party immediately assert themselves—Debate on calls—Final decision on patronage by the Assembly—Omission of instruction to commission as to repeal of Patronage Act—Sale of patronages during vacancy—Act against simony re-enacted—The Buchanites—The French Revolution —Effect upon the religious world of Britain—Church extension—Chapels of ease—Foreign missions—The Haldanes—Rowland Hill—Practice of receiving uneducated ministers into the Church—Pastoral letter—Warning against Sunday schools taught by incompetent teachers—Act of 1799.

THE contests in vacant parishes now became fewer for a time. Principal Robertson's policy was successful. The series of Assembly decisions had educated the mind of the Church as to the state of the law. Their consistency had also demonstrated to the people that the law must be obeyed. Mere dislike to the exercise of patronage was not a sufficient reason for refusing to accept a duly qualified presentee. Unless it could be shown upon good grounds that he was disqualified for the ministry in that parish to which he had been presented, he would be settled. Nothing is so productive of disquiet as uncertainty, either about the actual state of a law, or as to the mode of its administration. There was no uncertainty now, and the Church had peace.

But there were other matters than patronage which were now agitating the minds of churchmen. The question of subscription to creeds had begun to excite much interest. Some ministers evidently felt a difficulty in conscientiously declaring that they absolutely believed every one of the very numerous assertions, upon the most abstract and metaphysical subjects, which are contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith. It was an old controversy. It had been asserted, from the days of the Reformation, that private judgment was an inalienable right; and that if a man were bound to believe in all time coming, according to a certain system of theology, he was thereby

restricted from exercising the privilege of regulating his faith according to what he might discover in his researches in the Word of God. It began to be said that this restriction was peculiarly dangerous in the case of those who were to teach in the Church. There was no room for the exercise of independent opinion. They were certain to become mere repeaters of what they had bound themselves to teach; perhaps even not over honest maintainers of what, in point of fact, they did not sincerely hold. This feeling was gaining ground. It had been whispered in the days of Wodrow, as several letters in the third volume of his correspondence indicate. It was now being stated more openly. The question was boldly asked, What is the significance of subscription to a creed? How far is it binding? Does it imply that the subscriber absolutely holds to each individual proposition? Or is it only the general scope of the document that he declares himself to believe?

Such sentiments were, of course, vigorously opposed by those who claimed to be the orthodox and constitutional party. They asserted, quite as decidedly as their opponents maintained the contrary, that no man was entitled to subscribe such a document as the Westminster Confession unless he really believed all that it contained. To sign it and yet not to believe it was dishonest. A church was at liberty to declare what its own belief was, and to require of all who desired to hold office within her pale that they should engage to teach her doctrine and no other. The Church of Scotland had formally pledged herself by her treaty with the State that she would inculcate the doctrine of the Westminster Confession. She was bound to maintain her compact in this respect, as in all others, and she was bound to take care that the compact was not infringed by her individual ministers. No one was under any compulsion to take office in the Church. If he had scruples as to any of the particulars embodied in the standards, he had only to abstain from assenting to them; or if on further examination he could no longer conscientiously continue to hold them, he had only to resign his position as an office-bearer. But having declared his assent to the system of doctrine contained in the Church's symbol, it was his duty alike to the people of the

country, who were entitled to demand it of him, and to the Church, whose orders he held upon the understanding that he would do so, to teach and enforce the truth of Scripture as expounded and systematized in the Confession.[1]

Such were the general arguments on both sides by those who desired to retain the use of a symbol for subscription. But there was a party then, as there is still, who objected altogether to such bondage. They declared themselves opposed to all creeds, as needless and arbitrary restrictions upon independent research. They especially objected to so minute a formula as the Westminster Confession. If there was to be a symbol at all, it should be of the simplest and most general character, akin to the primitive forms of belief recorded as having been prescribed in holy Scripture. The controversy was not settled at the time. It can hardly be said to have been settled yet, although there has very recently been considerable alteration effected in the formula which has to be subscribed.[2] There was no formal proposition to abolish the symbol, or in any wise to dispense with the Westminster Confession. Principal Robertson was openly opposed to any such tendency. He well knew that it could not be accomplished by anything short of an ecclesiastical revolution. Probably also he felt that it was an absolute necessity that a Church incorporated with the State should have a definite system of doctrine recognized alike by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Practically, too, he may have seen that a definite creed, even of some minuteness, is a safeguard against rash speculation, and the hasty adoption of novelties in religious thought, the value of which more than outweighs the minor evils which are inseparable from any dogmatic formula.

Towards the close of Principal Robertson's ecclesiastical leadership, he devoted himself to the task of endeavouring to allay one of those strange religious panics which occasionally take possession of a community. It arose in connection with a proposal to modify certain disabilities under which the Roman Catholics in this country had long laboured. The reaction from Popery at the time of the Reformation had resulted, amongst other things, in the enactment of sanguinary

[1] *Scots Magazine*, xxix. 175. [2] Acts of Assembly, 1889.

laws against the Roman Catholics. Toleration was as little understood in those days by Protestant as by Papist. No sooner was the former faith established and secured by law, than death was denounced against any priest who should celebrate mass. Other laws were passed, scarcely less severe, against what was supposed to be the outcome of the spirit of Popery, in the machinations of Jesuitism, and the temptation of the people to apostatize to Romanism and to practise Romish rites. Even the tolerant William, when he came to the throne, was not proof against the cruel determination of the day to tread down the unfortunate Papists. During his reign the anti-Romanist legislation was extended to every part of the United Kingdom. It was enacted that any one reputed to be a priest, and refusing to disown Popery, might be banished the realm, and hanged if he came back. Any one present at a meeting where there was an altar, an image, a mass-book, or a priestly vestment, might suffer the same penalty. A premium was offered for such information as should lead to the apprehension of a priest, or of any one who should give him shelter. A Papist could not educate his own children. He could not purchase an acre of land, or a house. He could not succeed to property or money which even his nearest relative might wish to leave him. He could not be employed as a domestic servant.

But at length the tide began to turn. It came to be regarded as a disgrace to British legislation that such laws should be on the statute-book. In 1777 the penal laws against Irish Romanists were repealed. A year afterwards those applying to England were done away with also. Party spirit ran high at the time, but Whig and Tory alike united to bring about a result so accordant with the principles of Christian charity. These measures were carried by immense majorities. But when it was known that a Bill was to be introduced to deal with the laws in force in Scotland, an illiberal and intolerant spirit at once declared itself throughout that country. When the Assembly met in 1778 it was believed that the Scotch Acts might probably be repealed, during the session of the Parliament which was then sitting. A motion was accordingly made to empower the commission to watch over the parliamentary measure, and to oppose it by every means in its power. The motion was,

however, thrown out by a large majority—a hundred and eighteen votes against twenty-four.[1] Principal Robertson greatly contributed to this result by his powerful pleading. He had the deepest sympathy with the distressed Romanists, and he understood too well the principles of toleration not to be aware that all such disabilities, as those to which they were subjected, were not only unjustifiable in themselves, but were also a great political mistake. Yet his great practical sagacity would not suffer him to give his support to the proposed measure until he had thoroughly matured his views in regard to it, and was satisfied that the country at large was prepared to accept it. The very moderate character of the proposal when it appeared; the fact that it conferred no special privileges on the Papists—that it simply proposed to relieve them from the gross injustice to which they had for so long been subjected—went far to convince him of the propriety of the course he resolved to pursue. He believed, also, that his countrymen were sufficiently enlightened to be able to appreciate the Christian expediency of the repeal of these penal statutes.[2] But in this, as it soon appeared, he was mistaken. When the bill was actually brought into Parliament the country rose against it almost as one man. They remembered the atrocities of which Roman Catholics had, of old, been guilty. They knew that it was the great desire of the Roman Church to induce the country to revert to the ancient faith. Oblivious of the change that passes over all shades of faith by the lapse of time and the prevalence of sound political principles, they seem to have imagined that the only way to keep alive the truth in this country and to save themselves from the cruelties from which their fathers had suffered, was to crush their former oppressors with the same iron hand with which they had themselves been held down. There was a singular unanimity in the opposition to the measure of justice. Almost all the different corporate bodies in the kingdom, many of the private societies and clubs in the capital and provincial towns, many also of the church courts, both of the establishment and of the dissenters, joined in the outcry. The country and its faith

[1] *Scots Magazine*, xl. 269, 270.
[2] Speech in the General Assembly of 1778, in Stewart's "Life of Robertson."

were in danger; it became every loyal citizen and every good Christian to do his utmost to avert the evil. A volume of the addresses and manifestoes sent up to Parliament at the time still exists, extending to upwards of three hundred and fifty octavo pages.[1]

As might have been anticipated, when the fears and the passions of the mob were excited, the protests were not confined to addresses and manifestoes. In the spring of 1779 riots began in Edinburgh. A chapel which was recently erected in Leith Wynd, and which, it was rumoured, was to be specially adorned with Romish ornament, was burnt to the ground by the rabble. The library of the Roman Catholic bishop was also plundered, and an old chapel attached to his house was stripped of its sacred furniture, of which a bonfire was made in the streets. The magistrates seem to have been powerless to prevent these disorders, and the rabble next directed their fury upon the gentlemen who had supported the obnoxious measure of toleration. Principal Robertson was held in special odium. All sorts of insults were heaped upon him. For some days, indeed, his house was guarded by the military. Glasgow also exhibited the same lawless spirit, and similar outrages were perpetrated there. The fearful scenes enacted in London a year afterwards, under similar excitement, threw these Scottish disturbances into the shade. Nevertheless they were a disgrace to our protestant Presbyterianism.

When the Assembly met in May, 1779, the Government had intimated their intention of withdrawing the Scotch measure. But the subject was again taken up, and one of the most brilliant debates ensued that had ever been heard within the walls of the venerable court. Some of the advocates of popular rights urged the extreme hazard of emancipating the Roman Catholics from the disabilities under which they lay. Principal Robertson put forth all his strength, arguing that all such fears were groundless. He showed how small were the concessions which had been proposed, and how effectually the restrictions by which they were hedged about must prevent them from doing harm. He admitted, however, that the concession could not safely be made while the populace were in the state of excitement into

[1] See "Scotland's Opposition to the Popish Bill."

which they had been roused. Even their prejudices, he said, ought to be respected. He had therefore used his influence with the Government to withdraw the measure for the present, although, as he said, he had sacrificed his own private sentiments to what he believed essential to the public good. A motion was carried declaring that the repeal of the penal laws would be inexpedient and dangerous; that its abandonment was cause of congratulation; but that the lawless violence of the mob had been a source of shame and distress.[1]

It is pleasing to be able to record that Principal Robertson did not stand alone in his opposition to the fanatical spirit of the day. Principal Campbell of Aberdeen aided him manfully. He was not present at the Assembly where the finding noticed above was arrived at; but he had previously published an "Address to the People of Scotland upon the Alarms that have been raised in regard to Popery," in which the whole question is discussed with masterly power, and in an admirable spirit of Christian tolerance. If the cause of justice and charity did not at the time prevail, it was not because it lacked the advantage of sound and courageous advocacy.

It may be remarked that it was in the Assembly of 1779 that the first indication was given of the feeling against what were called "pluralities," which developed some years afterwards into so grave a subject of dispute. Hitherto it had been common for ministers to hold university chairs along with their parishes. It was usually a charge at the university seat of his professorship that the pluralist held; but there were instances in which he was the minister of a country parish, at such a distance from the university that it practically implied non-residence during the session. A feeling, however, was rising against this practice, as being contrary to the spirit of Presbyterianism, and incompatible also with the adequate discharge of the duties either of the pastorate or of the chair. Accordingly, when Professor Hill of St. Andrews, who held the chair of Greek in that university, was presented to the second charge in the town, a disposition was shown to oppose the union of the offices. One of the members of presbytery endeavoured to prevent his induction to the charge; and although

[1] For a full report of this interesting debate, see *Scots Magazine*, xli.

he stood alone, his petition and complaint to the Assembly being dismissed, and the professor settled without opposition, overtures against the practice were transmitted to the Assembly from the Synod of Fife and also from the Synod of Perth and Stirling. The Assembly appointed a committee to consider the overtures, and the committee recommended that they should also be dismissed, which was done.[1] So the matter ended for the present, but it was afterwards to be re-awakened, and to agitate the Church for a considerable time.

The person whose appointment to the plurality of offices had occasioned this discussion was destined ere long to fill an important position in the councils of the Church. He was acknowledged as the successor of Principal Robertson in the leadership of the Moderate party. The Assembly of 1780 was the last in which that great ecclesiastical politician took part. He was still in the prime of life. His power as a church leader was at its height, and apparently he might have looked forward to many years of usefulness and of honour in guiding the affairs of the Church. But he resolved to retire from active life, in order, as he said, that he might have greater leisure for the prosecution of his historical labours. It was a reason which might well have weighed with him, for an author, who had attained the unparalleled reputation which his histories of Scotland, of Charles V., and of America, had won for Principal Robertson, might well have been excused if he had chosen to devote all his energies to the literary work which had rendered him famous. But there was one subject which had given him so much anxiety in his conduct of ecclesiastical affairs, and which he was so fully convinced would before long be the leading topic of discussion, that his wish to avoid it confirmed his resolution to retire. This was the question of subscription to creeds, already adverted to. Sir Henry Moncrieff tells us how he had been informed by Principal Robertson that he was annoyed by the pertinacity, with which some of the members of his party urged him to throw the weight of his influence into the movement for the abolition of subscription. He was resolved that he would be no party to this proposal; but he believed that the discussion of it was to be the burning ques-

[1] Dr. Cook's "Life of Principal Hill," 83.

tion of future years, and he shrank from the thought of engaging in such a controversy.[1] Sir Henry adds that he does not, for himself, believe the discussion to be imminent: and it is remarkable that, notwithstanding Principal Robertson's fears, upwards of a hundred years have elapsed, and although a modification of the terms of subscription has recently been adopted, no such proposal as he seems to have dreaded has been submitted to the Church.

Dr. Robertson stands out as one of the wisest leaders the Church of Scotland ever possessed. It was the fashion, indeed, for a time, amongst the more extreme of the modern evangelical party, to disparage his work, and to brand his policy as dictatorial and tyrannical. But no such stricture of the actions of a great public leader was ever more unfounded. He had two great aims in his policy—to assert the subordination of the inferior church courts, and to vindicate the claims of constitutional law in the difficult question of patronage. It is true that he carried out his principles as applied to both these subjects with rigid inflexibility. But it is a mistake to fancy that there was any approach to overbearing demeanour in his action. He did nothing more than maintain the true principles of Presbyterianism, which those who chafed at his policy had sworn to maintain. And the course he followed, notwithstanding the defections from the numerical strength of the Church which it may have in some measure brought about, resulted in the best effects both on the Church and the country.

He found a state of utter uncertainty as to what the law of appointments to vacant parishes really was, and the church courts demoralized and in anarchy. He left the Assembly with the principle undisputed, that unless valid objections were proved against a qualified presentee his induction must follow, and that the inferior judicatories were bound to carry out the injunctions of their superiors. He aimed also at such a consistency in the criminal procedure of the church courts, that it might be conducted with as much regard to form and order as that of the High Court of Justiciary. Prejudice, or previous knowledge, gained from whatever source, could not be permitted, in his view, to influence a decision. No charge might be entered on unless it

[1] Stewart's "Life of Robertson," 196, Appendix.

was fairly contained in the libel, and a conviction ought never to follow except upon clear proof. These are great principles of law and justice, which a popular court like the General Assembly is too apt to overlook. A deep debt of gratitude is due to him for the ability with which he expounded them, and the unflinching integrity with which he carried them out. During his whole career, and especially at its close, he enjoyed the esteem and affection, not only of the adherents of his own party, but also of those who, from conscientious motives, were most strenuously opposed to him. He lived for many years after he retired from the Assembly, occupied in literary and academical pursuits, and in the faithful discharge of his pulpit and pastoral duties. Lord Cockburn describes him as he remembered when a boy to have seen him:—"A pleasant looking old man, with an eye of great vivacity and intelligence, a large projecting chin, a small hearing trumpet fastened by a black ribbon to a buttonhole of his coat, and a rather large wig powdered and curled."[1] His last days were spent in Grange House, at that time beyond the outskirts of Edinburgh, whither he had gone for the purpose of benefiting by the pure country air. He was aware for some time that his end was approaching, and in the spring of 1793—the year in which he died—he took a strange interest in watching the progress of the fruit blossoms, knowing the event that was to happen before they ripened into fruit.[2] He died on the 11th of June. All parties united in grief at his loss, and in the varied expression of their admiration of his character. His venerable colleague in the Greyfriars Chruch, Dr. John Erskine, although opposed to him on almost every public question, delivered his funeral sermon, and spoke of him in terms alike honourable to the preacher and to the subject of his eulogy.

When Robertson retired from the Assembly, the Anti-patronage party conceived that an opportunity had presented itself which they might use with advantage. It so happened that just then two settlements had taken place,[3] in which the people did not sign the call. There was no active opposition, but a

[1] Cockburn's "Memorials." [2] Stewart's "Life of Robertson," 132.
[3] Fenwick and Biggar.

total absence of any indication that the presentees would receive the customary welcome. The presbyteries were at a loss, but the Assembly, in respect that there was no opposition or definite objection stated, ordered the presbyteries to proceed to the settlement. The question therefore was at once raised whether the call was henceforth to be regarded as necessary to a settlement, or whether it might be dispensed with altogether. Overtures were sent up to the Assembly of 1781 on this subject from three different synods. Evidently there was a tendency to recede from the policy which Principal Robertson had established. The Synod of Glasgow and Ayr desired that no call be sustained unless signed by a majority of the heritors, elders, and communicants of the parish. This was incompetent. The Assembly also pronounced it dangerous.[1] The synods of Dumfries, and of Perth and Stirling, desired a definition of the call. Apparently the Assembly did not think it advisable to be too explicit; they dismissed these overtures also.[2]

Again, in 1782, overtures were sent up representing that presbyteries were proceeding to induction without a call, and praying that they should be discharged from doing so. Dr. Hill of St. Andrews was now recognized as Principal Robertson's successor, in the leadership of the Moderate party. Although at that time a comparatively young man, he was well worthy of the position, from his extensive acquirements in all departments of theological learning, his profound acquaintance with the constitution of the Church, and his deeply religious spirit. He was one of the most finished orators ever heard in the General Assembly, and he knew in perfection the art of persuading such an audience. He moved that the Assembly declare the moderation of a call to be a practice consistent with the immemorial usage of the Church of Scotland, but having no evidence that the practice had been departed from, that the overtures be dismissed as unnecessary. Much of his argument was directed not so much to the house itself, as to the public at large, with a view to allay their fear that unconstitutional innovation in connection with the absorbing question of patronage was contemplated. But the motion of Dr. Hill, as it did not satisfy the popular, was also unsatisfactory to a section of the

[1] *Scots Magazine*, xliii. 273. [2] Ibid.

Moderate, party. Dr. Macknight, minister of the Old Kirk, Edinburgh, an able and learned man, successfully opposed it. He proposed that the resolution of the Assembly be in these terms:—"The Assembly having considered the overtures, declare that the moderation of a call in settling ministers is agreeable to the immemorial usage of the Church, and ought to be continued." This motion was much more in accordance with the views of the popular party than was that of Dr. Hill. They coalesced with the section of the Moderate party headed by Dr. Macknight, and carried their point. The call was to be continued, but what constituted a valid call was not defined. Dr. Macknight's motion was a temporary recurrence to a vacillating policy, which was not calculated to lead to good results.

The controversy was continued for four years. In 1783 it was proposed to consult the landed proprietors as to the best method of getting rid of the evils of patronage. The proposal was rejected by a small majority. It was renewed in 1784, and again in 1785. But the Moderate party, under Dr. Hill's guidance, now saw that it was necessary to make a decided stand, and to assert the principle by which the Church must be guided once for all. The prolonged discussion was serving no good end. It was agitating the people of the country, and exciting hopes of getting these appointments into their own hands, which there was no prospect would ever be realized. They felt also that, take it all in all, although not without its defects as a system, patronage worked well, and would work still better if these profitless discussions were brought to an end. A motion was therefore made and carried in the Assembly of 1784, that "the overtures be rejected as inexpedient, ill-founded, and dangerous to the peace and welfare of the Church."

The Assembly of 1784 went further. Ever since the passing of the Patronage Act in 1712, the Assembly had annually instructed its commission to take every opportunity to endeavour to have that Act repealed. Principal Robertson did not think it expedient to interfere with this old custom. Probably he thought it unwise to do anything which might unnecessarily excite popular prejudice. But Dr. Hill and his friends were now convinced that it was inexpedient to continue this meaningless form. They thought it right that the Church should

recognize the law of patronage as not only constitutional, but beneficial. It was resolved therefore that these instructions to the commission regarding the Act of 1712 be no longer issued; and they accordingly disappear from this date.[1]

One of the most interesting features of this controversy was the publication of a pamphlet by Dr. Hardy, then minister of Ballingray, afterwards professor of church history in the University of Edinburgh. He belonged to the Moderate party, but he seems to have believed that the two great sections of the Church were not so hopelessly apart but that the moderate men on both sides might be able to coalesce. He confessed the evils with which patronage had been attended. He admitted that the people seemed hopelessly averse to it. It was the law however, and as such should be obeyed. But obedience was compatible with an effort to procure the removal of the grievance. His proposal was that the Act of 1712 should be rescinded; that Parliament be approached with this view; and that a scheme similar to the "Act of Assembly on Calls" in 1732, be substituted for patronage. The choice of a minister might well be left in the hands of the patron, a delegate from the heritors, and a delegate from the kirk session. The pamphlet was an able one. It was creditable alike to the head and the heart of the writer. It was reprinted in 1842, and frequently quoted during the discussions which issued in the abolition of patronage in 1874. But it produced no tangible result at the time it was published. Probably it came too late. The discussion died down. Peace was restored. The law was recognized. It was years before the controversy was renewed—then, as we shall unfortunately have to notice, with disastrous consequences. The only approach to a renewal of the bitter feeling occurred in 1787, when the patronage of St. Ninian's was advertised for

[1] *Scots Magazine*, xlvi. 277, 278. The whole subject of the "call" and its relation to patronage is most ably discussed in Dr. Cook's "Life of Principal Hill," 145–163. It is there conclusively shown that the call as contended for by the Anti-patronage party was originally the substitute for patronage, and is not compatible with the restoration of that system of appointment—that its practice was not the immemorial usage of the Church, and that it is not an essential part of the constitution of the Church. Dr. Cook sketches a scheme, by which the people should be asked to express their *concurrence* with the appointment of the minister, which would answer all the purposes of the "call," without being subject to the inconvenience arising from the competition between the "call" and the presentation. Such a concurrence was, in point of fact, acted on by the Presbytery of Glasgow, till the passing of the Veto Act in 1834

sale while the parish was vacant. But there was no division of opinion. The Moderate and the popular parties were equally strong in their condemnation of so unseemly a proceeding. It was a direct encouragement to simony; and when overtures came up from three synods on the question, the Assembly unanimously recorded a resolution declaring its strong condemnation of simony, and appointing a committee to revise the laws against it.[1] The Assembly was unanimous, yet nothing appears to have been done. Public opinion was probably too strong against such a practice to make it a source of very great danger.

It was about this time that the country was scandalized by the eccentric blasphemies of the Buchanites, a small sect of licentious and ignorant fanatics, who were cajoled by a woman named Mrs. Buchan into the belief that she was the Third Person in the Trinity. The Relief minister of Irvine associated himself with them, and was deposed for the beliefs he had adopted. Thereupon Mrs. Buchan asserted that this person—the Rev. Hugh White—was the man-child of the Apocalypse, who was to rule the nations with a rod of iron. The small community which she had succeeded in collecting together conducted themselves in so unseemly a fashion that the people of Irvine drove them out. They journeyed from place to place, chanting hymns, composed by White, to ballad tunes. At last they settled in Nithsdale, where they proceeded to establish themselves. They had all things common; disregarded the marriage tie; separated the children from their parents, and, it was said, practised infanticide. They believed they would never die, and lived in the constant expectation of being summoned to meet the Lord in the air. To prepare themselves for this event they resolved to fast for forty days. For several weeks they tasted nothing but treacle and water at long intervals, all except Mrs. Buchan herself, who stooped to partake of food lest she should become over-etherealized. The magistrates interfered and prevented these fanatics from starving themselves to death, upon which they adjourned to a slight eminence and proposed to fly to heaven. As might have been anticipated, they were not successful in this experiment, and were again ejected from their temporary resting-place by their

[1] *Scots Magazine*, xlix. 256.

exasperated neighbours. On the death of the impostor Buchan some of her dupes recanted their errors and went to America, although others continued to live as a separate community at Auchengibbert, in Galloway, whither they had gone when they had been expelled from Dumfriesshire. They retained their strange opinions and practices until they died out. It was a curious instance of the reckless vagaries which religious fanaticism can engender, even in the sober-minded Scottish character.[1]

Toward the close of the century it was rumoured that heresy was beginning to develop itself among some of the clergy, particularly in the west of Scotland. It became evident that the rumours were not without foundation when Dr. M'Gill, a minister in Ayr, published his "Essay on the Death of Christ." A slight examination sufficed to show that the author had diverged from the orthodox creed as understood in Scotland. The essay represented the sacrifice of Christ as being merely figurative, and that repentance was the true atonement for sin. It taught that God had not inflicted the penalty of our sins on Christ, and that His death was only the fullest expression of His obedience to the Father's will.[2] The Presbytery of Ayr took up the book. The Synod of Glasgow and Ayr expressed their views upon it, and there was much discussion as to the significance of the author's language. But Dr. M'Gill was not the man to be a martyr. He had no wish to be deposed; so he explained some of his opinions, and retracted others. The synod accepted his explanations, and the matter came to an end.[3]

An impulse from an unexpected quarter was given at this time to the practical work of the Church, by the great Revolution in France. The corruption of ages had come to a crisis at last. The fearful doings of the Reign of Terror showed what human nature was capable of when its depravity was roused. The best blood of the nation ran from the scaffold. The representative of an ancient dynasty was brought to the block. Religion was declared to be an imposture, and the worship of Reason was blasphemously substituted for the worship of God. Britain was happily saved from partici-

[1] See Train's "The Buchanites, from First to Last." [2] See "Essay," Edin., 1786.
[3] "Proceedings of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr in the case of Dr. M'Gill."

pation in the revolutionary outburst; but there were not wanting those who, by their inflammatory writing and declamation, would fain have stirred the flame, which in some quarters of even our more favoured land was ready to break out.

It was not surprising, therefore, that the Church should open her eyes to the necessities of the day, and begin to realize, as she had never done before, that there were departments of duty, both towards the people of this country and the world at large, which she had never adequately overtaken. The Church of Scotland formed no exception to this awakening. The parochial system, although in many respects an admirable one, labours under the defect that unless it is regularly and systematically supplemented, it may become unequal to the requirements of the population. A parish which was originally sparsely peopled by a peasantry wholly occupied in rural affairs, may become the centre of a mineral or of a manufacturing industry, and the old parish church may become quite incapable of containing those who seek to worship in it. The parish minister finds also that the increase in the number of his parishioners renders it impossible for him to supply their spiritual wants. This was becoming deeply felt in many parts of Scotland as the commercial interests of the country expanded, and especially as the application of machinery to the manufacture of cotton and woollen fabrics became more extensively practised. Hitherto the Church of Scotland had not adequately realized the transition through which the country was passing. She had not fully grasped the necessity of meeting the wants of the day, if she was to retain her influence. But the events which were taking place on the other side of the Channel aroused all classes from their lethargy. They had as yet been spared. The storm, which had descended with such violence upon the neighbouring kingdom, had not as yet reached them. Every means must be taken to avert it.

Churchmen began to consider the question of the accommodation for worshippers under the old system. When they made inquiries it was found in many cases to be extremely defective. There was no way by which new parishes could be erected in those days. But it was possible in overgrown centres to erect a new church, and appoint a minister to preach in it.

This had, of course, to be done by the free-will offerings of the people, who were not slow to contribute to so good an object. But occasionally there were instances in which the object in supporting a chapel was not altogether satisfactory. When a minister whom the people had opposed was settled in a parish, they sometimes tried to solve the difficulty in which they found themselves, by asking leave to erect another church where they would, themselves, support another minister. Such a proposal was without doubt the strongest test of their sincerity. It was also a strong proof of their loyalty to the Church of Scotland. But there were difficulties in the way of encouraging such a tendency. It must have been assumed that in giving a deliverance by which a minister was to be settled in a parish, the Assembly was not only legally right, but that it was really doing the best for the interests of the parish and of the Church at large. The Assembly was bound therefore to take every possible means to maintain its own decisions, and to protect the minister whom it had declared should be settled, in the enjoyment of all the rights and privileges, and in the exercise of the duties, of the position in which it had placed him. But it would have been doing the very reverse, if it were to encourage the people, whom it had enjoined to wait upon the ministrations of the parish minister, to provide themselves with ordinances under the sanction of the Church, yet apart from those of that minister, for no other reason than that they had conceived a dislike to him which had been shown to be causeless. It was, of course, different when the church was quite full, or when it was so far away from the population that they could not go to it without great inconvenience. Then there could be no doubt about the duty to provide the accommodation which might be required.

But opinion was not unanimous, although the point seems so very clear. On the one hand, it was maintained that a chapel should never be sanctioned so long as there was an empty seat in the parish church; on the other, it was asserted that where people were dissatisfied, it was better that there should be a chapel in connection with the Church, than a dissenting place of worship. The matter came before the Assembly in 1795. A committee was appointed to consider

it, and to report what should be done. They reported the next year, to the effect that when an application was made to a presbytery to sanction the building of a chapel, the presbytery should take means to satisfy itself as to the necessity for the proposal, and the manner in which the chapel was to be built and the minister to be provided for, and should then refer the matter to the Assembly to be finally determined upon by that court.

The Moderate party desired that this report should be sustained. But the clause in which the matter is referred to the Assembly for final adjudication was strongly opposed by the popular party. They had calculated upon the power in such cases remaining with the presbytery, and they doubtless believed that in cases of causeless dissatisfaction with a minister, a presbytery, from its local prejudice, might be more easily persuaded to give its sanction to a chapel, than a tribunal altogether removed from local influence, as the Assembly is. They urged their view ostensibly on the ground that the matter was one in which the presbytery, and not the Assembly, had the power of determining according to the constitution of the Church. They asserted therefore that the recommendation of the report was a violation of the constitution.

The Moderate party saw the danger of committing such a power into the hands of the presbytery. They met the argument as to the constitutional question by a direct negative. They declared that the General Assembly was the radical church court. It had been the first to meet after the Reformation. The inferior judicatories were created by the Assembly, and derived all their power from it. It was quite reasonable, therefore, that the Assembly should reserve to itself the right to say what questions should be disposed of by the inferior courts, and what should be submitted to its own adjudication. This question of chapels of ease was too important to be decided otherwise than by the supreme judicatory. It was a point of order which on all accounts the Moderate party desired to see adhered to. They reverenced order in the minutest detail. Yet the successors of the popular party of that day have not scrupled to charge the Moderate party of that day with such hatred to evangelical doctrine, that they adopted this amongst

other methods of extinguishing it.[1] The Moderate party were, however, successful. After being twice before the presbyteries in terms of the Barrier Act, the proposal in the report was finally adopted. The result has amply justified the wisdom of its supporters a hundred years ago. The circumstances of the country are now, of course, entirely changed. But in the erection of chapels in populous parishes, the Assembly still wisely retains the prerogative of deciding upon the constitution which they shall receive.

But it was not only to matters connected with the religion of the people at home, that the attention of the more thoughtful was directed by the terrible events of the French Revolution. The question of the religious interests of the world at large was equally forced upon them. All the Reformed churches partook now more or less of the missionary spirit. They had been too much occupied with their own internal affairs, for many years after they had thrown off the yoke of Romanism, to have time or inclination to look abroad. Rome continued to propagate her own views of Christianity, as she had always zealously done. Protestantism remained unaggressive. But in the upheaval occasioned by the events in France, the lethargy, into which the Protestant Church had fallen as regards missions to the heathen, began to give way. The Baptist Missionary Society had been instituted, and the accounts of its work were read with thrilling interest. At last the fervour of the missionary spirit reached Scotland. Missionary societies were formed in Glasgow and in Edinburgh. The venerable Dr. Erskine acted as president of the latter, and at a time when missions were regarded very widely as the product of a Quixotic enthusiasm, the universal respect in which he was held gave weight to the society of which he was the head. Overtures in favour of missions were sent up to the Assembly of 1796, from the Synod of Fife and the Synod of Moray. The latter synod has the merit of indicating the method by which missionary enterprise should be supported. It proposed that collections should be made for it throughout the Church, as is now done.

It is not surprising that the subject should have been at first regarded as chimerical. The Christian thought of the country

[1] Hetherington's "Church History," G. S.

was not yet fully awakened to the true import of such a movement. People of all shades of religious belief, in England as well as in Scotland, were united in the idea that the attempt to Christianize the world must prove nothing else than a disastrous failure. The faith of the Church in general was weak. When the overtures came before the Assembly there was a strong feeling against their adoption. The arguments which are even yet occasionally urged, although now only with bated breath, were put boldly to the front: there was heathenism at our own door—it was the duty of the Church to cope with that before seeking to convert the heathen abroad —the amenities of civilization must precede the work of the Gospel—St. Paul's efforts were among the cultured of Greece and Rome when he sought to declare the power of the Cross as the salvation of the world. The proposals as to collections were met by the practical objection that the church-door collections were by statute to be applied to the relief of the poor, and could not be diverted to any other purpose.

The most pronounced speech against the movement was that of Mr. Hamilton, the minister of Gladsmuir, who embodied such arguments as we have noticed in his address. When he sat down Dr. Erskine rose, and, in his broad vernacular, said: "*Moderator, rax*[1] *me that Bible!*" The Bible, which lay upon the moderator's table, was accordingly handed to the venerable doctor, who turned to the passage in the Acts of the Apostles where St. Paul's shipwreck is described, and the marvel of the "barbarous people" when the venomous viper was shaken off the apostle's hand and he suffered no hurt. "Think you," he said when he had finished reading, "that when Paul wrought his miracles at Malta and was taken to be a God, he did not also preach Christ to the barbarians and explain whose name it was through which such power was given unto men?" He went on to argue this from the ancient history of the Church, and from St. Paul's own testimony, who held himself "debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise," that he should preach Christ to every creature.[2]

Dr. Erskine's reasonings did not prevail; and this circum-

[1] "Reach," an expressive Scotticism. [2] "Lives of the Haldanes," 134, 135.

stance is frequently adduced to the great discredit of the Moderate party of the day. But the truth is that, although they did not regard it as expedient, at the time, to inaugurate a movement in favour of missions, the motion which they carried evinced no small sympathy with the whole subject. That for which Dr. Erskine and his friends contended was to the effect, that the Assembly had not sufficient information to enable them to come to a judgment, and therefore remitted the matter to a committee to take it into consideration and report to next General Assembly. The motion which was carried by the Moderate party was in the following terms, and in view of the uncharitable misrepresentations to which it is often subjected, it is right that it should be allowed to speak for itself:—

"The General Assembly having considered the overtures, and judging it highly inexpedient, at this time, to appoint a collection over Scotland, by the authority of the General Assembly; and not considering the circumstances of the times as favourable for the General Assembly's adopting any particular measure in relation to the object of the overtures, dismiss the same. At the same time recommend to all the members of the Church of Scotland in their different stations, to take every competent method of promoting within the sphere of their influence the knowledge of the Gospel, a just sense of the inestimable benefits it conveys to all who embrace it, and the practice of those virtues by which Christians make their light to shine before others. And while they offer their fervent prayers to Almighty God for the fulfilment of His promise, in giving His Son the heathen for an inheritance, they resolve that they will embrace, with zeal and with thankfulness, any favourable opportunity of contributing, by their exertions, to the propagation of the Gospel of Christ, which Divine Providence may hereafter open."[1]

The Assembly may have erred in their judgment. They may have exercised an over-caution, in their fear that the time for the Church's sending missions to the heathen had not yet arrived. But in view of the terms of the motion which they carried, they cannot truly be charged with either opposition or indifference to the great cause. The "favourable opportunity," to which they looked forward, did come by common consent a generation afterwards; and the Moderate party showed that the terms of their motion were not mere words

[1] Abridgment of "The Acts of Assembly," 856. note.

of course, by being themselves the chief promoters of the work of missions, both at home and abroad.

As the eighteenth century drew to a close the Church found it necessary to vindicate herself from the injudicious interference of well-meaning but imprudent men who, under the guise of evangelical fervour, were promoting a species of disorder calculated to be extremely hurtful to religion and morality. James and Robert Haldane, sons of the proprietor of the estate of Airthrey, on which the popular watering-place of Bridge-of-Allan now stands, had become deeply impressed with religious truth, and abandoning their profession (in the navy), betook themselves to the work of evangelists. In the spring of 1797 James Haldane set out on a tour in the West of Scotland, accompanied by John Campbell, an ironmonger in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh, who afterwards became famous as an African traveller. The work they undertook was to establish Sunday-schools and to distribute tracts. They established sixty schools in the course of this journey, and distributed some thousands of tracts.[1] From this kind of work to something more pronounced, the transition was easy. James Haldane began to preach. His first effort was in the parish of Liberton, where he did not think the Gospel was declared with sufficient fulness by the parish minister It was known that he had been a sailor. Crowds came to hear him preach on that account. But they returned, and others came when he went elsewhere, when it became known that he preached with earnestness and with fervour. He preached generally at the Market Cross or in the public street, sending round the town drummer the night before, to intimate where and when he should do so. But he generally attended the parish church at the morning service, and when he was dissatisfied with what he heard there he intercepted the people on the way homewards, and expatiated at large upon the doctrinal defects of the parish pulpit. Along with some companions he made several preaching tours after this fashion—visiting almost every parish in Scotland, and criticising the doctrine of the parish minister whenever he thought fit.

In 1798 the Haldanes were joined by Rowland Hill, who came to open a circus as a tabernacle for the Haldanes' use.

[1] "Lives of the Haldanes."

As is well known, he was an earnest but most eccentric preacher, abounding in racy sayings and in happy anecdote. He had a frank, jovial manner, which greatly commended what he taught, and he preached the Gospel with large-hearted freeness. Crowds attended him when he preached in Edinburgh, and on one occasion it is said he preached on the Calton Hill to nearly twenty thousand persons. He was received, however, with not unmingled cordiality. The shrewd Scottish character was not altogether taken with his eccentricities. His habit of kneeling to pray when he entered the pulpit was not accordant with the rigid Presbyterianism of the day, and it is said that he greatly offended a family of seceders, with whom he was staying for a time, by praying that his horse might be cured of lameness to enable him to continue his journey.[1] When he returned to England he published a journal of his tour, in which he spoke of what he had seen in Scotland in a manner which was more plain than pleasant to his Scottish brethren. He spared neither the Established Church nor the dissenting churches. He declared that they were alike chargeable with intolerance and bigotry. He said of the Solemn League and Covenant, which the seceders had sworn to, that it was a more persecuting law than the Act of Uniformity. He accused the Established clergy of preaching a half gospel, and declared that personally many of them were moralists and infidels.

Both the Haldanes and Rowland Hill were good men. But they were lacking in charity. They knew the Gospel that was preached in the parish churches very imperfectly. Rowland Hill could have known no more of it than the preaching of a few Sundays. And even if the Haldanes had penetrated through the greater part of the country, their knowledge of the doctrine set forth by the ministers of the various parishes they visited must have been limited to one or two sermons at the outside. It was rash and unwarrantable to unsettle the minds of the people, and to undermine their confidence in their spiritual advisers, upon such slender grounds as these men must have had. The church courts thought it necessary to interfere and to express their disapprobation of such an ill-judged interference. Probably they were in some cases actuated by embittered feeling, for it

[1] Jones' "Memoir of Rowland Hill."

would scarcely be in human nature for the ministers to know that systematic censure was being causelessly hurled at them, and not have taken means to put a stop to its violence. But the leaders of the Assembly, Dr. Hill and his colleagues, encouraged the representations which were made, for they saw that this was only the crisis of an evil which had long been imminent, and from which they knew that the worst results must flow if it were unchecked. This was the admission into the Church of men who had passed through no university curriculum, and who, after a period of attendance in some English dissenting seminary, received ordination from the nonconformist denomination to which it belonged; and in due course appeared before a Scottish presbytery with a presentation and a call, demanding to be admitted as parish ministers in Scotland. Several instances of this kind had already taken place. There was an evident danger that the character of the Scottish clergy, for scholarship and culture, might seriously deteriorate. Some of the parish ministers had admitted both the Haldanes and Rowland Hill to their pulpits. If laymen were to be allowed to occupy the pulpits of the Church recognized by the State, what guarantee had the people for the soundness of the doctrine which they might hear in their parish churches; and what need was there for the long and laborious course of study through which a candidate had to pass, before he could be regarded as duly qualified either to preach or to take the duties of a parish?

The Assembly accordingly agreed to send out a pastoral letter, in which it warned the people to be on their guard against these itinerant teachers, who were intruding themselves into the parishes of the Church without the consent either of the presbytery or of the ministers; establishing Sunday-schools without consulting those who were responsible for the religious upbringing of the young, and appointing teachers for them who were ignorant and incompetent for the duty. This admonition has often been criticised as being inimical to the great Sunday-school system, which was afterwards so happily developed. But it should be remembered that the jealousy with which the Moderate party regarded these institutions, which were then an untried novelty, arose not from regardlessness as to whether

or not the children of the country should be allowed to grow up ignorant of Gospel truth, but from a recognition of the deep importance of the work, and the desire that it should be undertaken by none, except such as had due credentials of being fit for the teacher's office. The necessities of the times, and their changing circumstances, have compelled the successors of these cautious churchmen to be less scrupulous as to the qualifications of those who are employed in Sunday-school work. But the more widely the system develops itself, the more is it apparent that its great weakness is precisely that which our fathers dreaded, the incompetency of those who, with the best intentions, have yet no aptness to teach.

The Assembly also passed an Act by which it declared that none but its own licentiates were qualified to receive a presentation to a vacant parish. That this was a reasonable and strictly orderly provision none will deny. The Church was responsible for the spiritual instruction of the people. She could only discharge this solemn duty by taking care to be satisfied that those whom she licensed to preach the Gospel were duly qualified. When a presentation was addressed to any of her presbyteries in favour of one of her own licentiates, she had *prima facie* evidence that he had undergone the training, which in her judgment fitted him to be a candidate for the ministry. She had no such evidence in the case of licentiates of other religious bodies. In the highest aspect of the case, therefore, as well in the comparatively inferior view of justice to her own probationers, the Church was bound to enact as she did.

The second part of the Act has been more closely questioned. It prohibited ministers from employing any one to preach in their pulpits, except ministers or probationers of the Church of Scotland. Was this not, it is asked, an uncharitable restriction, unworthy of the Catholic sympathy of the Christian Church, and of the liberal traditions of the Church of Scotland? It excluded dissenting ministers and lay preachers of every class from the pulpits of the Church. It excluded Rowland Hill.

A measure must be judged of by the necessities of the times in which it comes into operation. Unquestionably such an enactment would find no favour with the large-hearted compre-

hensiveness of the present day. Moreover, there is no need for any such restriction. Ministerial communion may in these times be safely trusted to regulate itself; and but recently the Act, which remained on the statute-book of the Church for the greater part of a century, was happily repealed. But the times in which it was enacted were critical. Under the guise of zeal for a better faith and a higher life, the itinerant preachers were denouncing the doctrine of the Church, and proclaiming it false, in the ears of the people. Again, the demands of a strong sense of duty were imperative. Did the Church believe that the doctrine she was inculcating was the truth of God, and essential to the spiritual life of the people over whom she was placed? If so she had but one course to follow. It must have been painful to high-minded men to cut themselves apart from any who professed to be actuated by zeal for the cause of the great Master. But their duty to their people and to the Head of the Church outweighed, in their estimation, all minor considerations; and they would rather incur the odium of being reputed by the unthinking as narrow-minded and uncharitable, than refrain from taking such measures, as were open to them, to shield their flocks from the inroads of teaching of whose accordance with Scripture they were by no means assured, even although they might respect the zeal of its propounders.

CHAPTER XXX.

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY TO THE DEPOSITION OF IRVING, 1832.

State of the Church—Old Light Burghers—Constitutional Associate Presbytery—Reformed Presbyterians—Death of the Pretender—Episcopalians—Popery in remote Highlands—Decrease of collections for the poor—Heritors assessed—Parish and Assembly schools—Scottish piety—Thomas Chalmers and Andrew Thomson—The Leslie case—Moderate party defeated—The popular party—*The Christian Instructor*—Pluralities—Assembly passes a Declaratory Act—Renewed discussion in Assembly of 1816—Overture sent down to presbyteries—Enacted in Assembly of 1817—Principal M'Farlan's case—Overtures on pluralities—Dr. Chalmers' pamphlet—Royal commission—Foreign missions—Scheme sketched by Dr. Inglis—Dr. Duff ordained and sent out to India—Apocrypha controversy—Campbell of Row—Edward Irving—His popularity in London—Confusion in his congregation—Irving's alleged error as to human nature of Christ—Ejected from his Church in London—Deposition and death—Influence of Campbell and Irving.

THE commencement of the nineteenth century was the commencement also of a new order in church affairs, as it was in almost all the secular matters connected with the ordinary usages of society. It is like bidding farewell to a phase of life which has become very familiar to us when we enter upon another epoch. We may look round for a moment upon the Church of Scotland as it was when the eighteenth century closed, before we proceed to trace her fortunes through the eventful periods that still lie before us.

The clergy had long been divided into the two great parties known by the names of Moderate and Evangelical. We have sufficiently indicated the distinctive features of the policy which each sought to carry out. Perhaps it might rather be said that it was the Moderate party alone that had a definite policy. Their opponents, although with the purest motives and the most sincere desire for the furtherance of religion and the welfare of the Church, had only one aim in what they called their policy—viz. to prevent ministers being intruded upon parishes against the will of the people. They had satisfied themselves that the Gospel, which they honestly desired to proclaim in its fulness, could not be favourably received from one whose settlement amongst them the people had from any cause opposed. They were inclined, therefore, to set aside all other consider-

ations, even those which the Moderate party truly believed to be inseparable from righteousness and justice, in order to accomplish their favourite end.

Hitherto the ability and learning of the Church had unquestionably been with the Moderate party. There were sound and powerful preachers on the other side—such as Dr. Webster, Dr. Erskine, and Dr. Dick—but there were none whose fame equalled that of Dr. Blair, or whose exhibitions of Gospel truth rivalled in richness of doctrine, or in elegance of style, those of Principal Hill. They had ready and able debaters also on the floor of the Assembly, both amongst the clerical and the lay members, but none who could for a moment compete with the overwhelming persuasiveness of Principal Robertson, or of his successors in the leadership of the party. It may be admitted that both parties had a high ideal of the character of the ministry. They each endeavoured to realize it in their own way. The Evangelical party, for the most part, carried their official reserve into their ordinary intercourse. Probably the lax morality too prevalent at the time, justified their caution in giving countenance to even innocent amusement. The Moderate clergy, apparently, took a different view of a clergyman's position. They held it to be their duty to endeavour to leaven society, and to give countenance to such recreations, innocent in themselves, as should show that the Gospel they preached was not a system of cheerless gloom. They systematically cultivated, therefore, the accomplishments which form the amenities of general society, and which impart to it its greatest charm. But there is no indication that they did not carry their "moderate" principles into their enjoyments as truly as into their church polity, or that they were not, as a rule, men of dignified and exemplary character.

It is equally unjust to charge them as a body with teaching unsound doctrine. It is quite true that the speculative spirit, which had been awakened by the writings of Hume and others, had to some extent influenced the clergy of the day; and it is possible that those of the Moderate party, thoughtful and cultured as they were, may have studied these subjects more widely than their friends of the Evangelical school, who were not, on the whole, in the habit of addicting themselves to philo-

sophical pursuits. But if some of the party may have had speculative difficulties as to certain of the truths of revealed religion, it is obvious, from the total absence of any hint at prosecution, which after Dr. M'Gill's case would have been certainly resorted to, that those who entertained such dubiety of thought were not numerous, and that they did not obtrude their difficulties upon their people. They laboured in their pulpit ministrations to enforce the morality of the Gospel. They were urged to this by seeing how greatly it was disregarded by all classes. Perhaps they erred in dwelling too frequently upon such themes, and in not pressing them upon the consciences of their hearers by the considerations arising from the doctrines of grace. But even this could only be said of a limited number: it cannot be asserted of the leaders of the party, nor even of the great majority of its rank and file. When sweeping assertions of so unwarranted a character are made against the clergy of the Moderate school, the tables might easily be turned, and it might with equal truth be said that there were cases in which the doctrines of grace were proclaimed, while their effect as productive of Christian fruit was too much overlooked. Burns' famous satire[1] has without doubt a foundation in fact. But any such recrimination would be as unfair to the Evangelical party as are the counter-allegations regarding the Moderate school. The truth is, that while there were instances of defective teaching and of defective living amongst the adherents of both the great parties in the Scottish Church, the great majority of both parties were worthy representatives of their sacred profession, and did good service to the country and to the cause of religion.

Dissent was increasing, however, with considerable rapidity. Wherever the people were dissatisfied with an appointment under patronage, they withdrew to the nearest meeting-house, or erected one for themselves. The seceders, of course, warmly encouraged all such defections from the Established Church, and kept a sharp outlook for every opportunity of setting up a congregation. They were, however, themselves torn with internal dissension. In 1799 a party from the Burgher Synod withdrew from that body, on account of a dispute as to the obligation

[1] "Holy Willie's Prayer."

of the Covenants, and of the power of the civil magistrate, as specified in the Westminster Confession. They constituted themselves into a separate community, under the name of the Old Light Burghers. The Anti-burghers had a similar dispute about the same time; and a few years afterwards, in 1806, a secession took place from that denomination also, the seceders taking the name of the Constitutional Associate Presbytery. Dr. M'Crie was the leader of this movement, and notwithstanding his fame as a divine and as a man of letters, he was excommunicated by his former friends of the Anti-burgher persuasion.[1]

The representatives of the views of Cameron and Cargill still continued to testify for the Covenants. In 1743 a dissentient minister of the Secession Church joined their number, and along with Mr. M'Millan and a few elders constituted themselves into the Reformed Presbytery. They were never very numerous, but they continue to this day, although their number was of recent years still further reduced by the amalgamation of the majority with the Free Church.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century, in 1788, the Scottish Episcopalians were relieved from what they conceived to be their allegiance to the house of Stuart, by the death of Prince Charles Edward. His brother, Cardinal York, still lived; but as he had abandoned all pretension to the crown, loyalty to him as the sovereign was not demanded of Scottish Episcopacy. They accordingly took advantage of the opportunity to assert their allegiance to the house of Hanover. They resolved henceforth to pray for King George III. The titular Bishop of Dunblane and the incumbent of Montrose refused compliance with this resolution, as in their view a dereliction of principle, and many of the older Jacobites regarded the determination with much aversion. But the good sense of the majority prevailed, and they adopted the change. Having done so, they felt that they might reasonably demand that they should be protected in the exercise of their religious worship. The Presbyterians, both lay and clerical, exerted themselves to forward their views, and in 1792 an Act was passed by which their disabilities were removed.[2] Previous

[1] See "Life of Dr. M'Crie."

[2] Skinner's "Annals of Scotch Episcopacy;" Stephen's "History of the Church," vol. iv.

to this they had introduced a new communion office. It is based upon the First Service Book of Edward the Sixth and the liturgy of Archbishop Laud, which had been so ignominiously rejected in the seventeenth century. It is usually regarded by Episcopalians as leaning more to the office of the Eastern than to that of the Western Church; but however that may be, in the prayer that the "bread and wine may become the body and blood of God's Son," there seems to be a near approach to one of the most flagrant errors of Romanism.

There were certain remote districts in the Highlands and islands of Scotland in which Popery still prevailed. The Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge had, however, planted numerous schools in remote glens and valleys, and it had subsidized itinerant missionaries, who had been able to penetrate where the agency of the Church had not yet reached. In some instances the influence they had brought to bear upon the Highland chieftains had resulted in their conversion to Protestantism; and in these cases the patriarchal feeling was so strong that the mass of the peasantry often followed the example of the head of the clan.

The provision for the celebration of public worship, and for the diffusion of education among the people, was but scanty and inadequate, at the commencement of the century. The incomes of the parish ministers were, as we have already seen, for the most part miserably small, and it was not until the present century had fairly commenced that measures were taken to render them more sufficient. There was a law of the Scots Parliament, passed soon after the Revolution, which imposed upon the heritors of every parish the duty of providing a school, and a salary for the schoolmaster; but it was frequently neglected or evaded. The Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, in 1758, directed the attention of the Assembly to the great number of parishes in the Highlands where there were no schools. Many new schools were in consequence established, and many chapels were built where the parish church was too far away to be available for the population. Still the schoolmasters were but poorly paid, and they had generally to unite several offices in order to be able to live.

The churches in many parts of the country were mean and

poor. In the principal towns, indeed, they were often spacious, the old pre-Reformation edifices in some cases remaining, although they were in almost every instance barbarously disfigured by the introduction of galleries, whitewash, and subdividing partitions. But throughout the country parishes nothing could be more indecent than the spectacle which the house of God, too often, presented. The simplicity, which was supposed to characterize Presbyterian worship, well suited the parsimony which the heritors generally exercised when they came to build or to repair the parish church. It was, commonly, an unsightly building, standing gaunt and unadorned in the midst of the graveyard—four ugly walls and a roof, often without even a belfry to indicate its sacred purpose—the bell hanging on a tree. But for its solemn and significant surroundings, it might well have been mistaken for a barn. The interior was frequently even more discreditable—the pulpit and the pews rickety and rotten, the damp plaster falling from the walls, the earthen floor sometimes converted into mud. The Puritan spirit had so thoroughly taken possession of the Scottish mind, that it appeared to be assumed that discomfort and unseemliness promoted spirituality of worship, and that any attempt to enhance the enjoyment of the service, through outward accessories, must be unacceptable to Almighty God.

It is pleasing to think that while it was often in the utmost discomfort that the people of Scotland engaged in the exercises of their weekly worship, their piety was deep and genuine. The pastoral life of a great part of the population was favourable to contemplation, and even, in a measure, to the study of such literature as was then available. This was almost entirely of a religious type. Boston's works, and stray copies of those of the Puritans, formed to a large extent the reading of the Scottish peasantry of the eighteenth century. They were educated in the Shorter Catechism in early youth, and the propositions of that venerable treatise, acquired at first without much appreciation of their bearing upon one another, or even of their general significance, remained deeply engraven upon their memories, and, in the case of the more intelligent at least, formed the basis of a system which in after years they were able to think out for themselves, and which often moulded their

life and actions, with the best results. Based upon such a foundation, the piety of the peasantry of Scotland, during the period at which we are looking back, was naturally of a stern, perhaps even to some extent of a gloomy, cast. It regarded the attribute of justice in the Almighty more closely than that of His love. The element of fear entered, perhaps more than was desirable, into the motives which prompted their service of the Supreme Being. But the religious character, which was reared up in this way, was conspicuous for its massive strength; and in its finer types the tenderness was all the more remarkable from the awful reverence with which the Deity was habitually regarded. There are exquisite pictures of the piety of the Scottish peasant in Sir Walter Scott's novel of the "Heart of Midlothian," and in Burns' immortal poem, "The Cottar's Saturday Night." There is no reason to think them exaggerated; and whatever may have been the virulence of ecclesiastical disputation, the system which could have produced a state of family life of which these present fair and frequent specimens, could not have fallen far short of the attainment of the great end of all church polity.

The beginning of the new century witnessed a change in the aspect of parties in the Church. The old leaders had passed away Younger men were rising up to take their places. Principal Hill continued to hold his position as the leader of the Moderate party, in succession to Principal Robertson. Dr. John Erskine's place, as head of the popular section, was taken by his friend and biographer, Sir Henry Moncrieff, a man of wide culture and liberal sentiments, who, in point of fact, united in himself the best features both of the Moderate and of the Liberal parties, and enjoyed the respect and the confidence of both. But the great luminaries of the Evangelical party, and of the Church generally, were now about to appear above the horizon. Thomas Chalmers was licensed to preach the Gospel in 1799, although at that time only in his twentieth year, as "a lad of very pregnant parts."[1] Three years afterwards, in 1802, at an age not much greater, Andrew Thomson was licensed.[2]

It was in 1805 that the first great ecclesiastical dispute of

[1] Hannah's "Life of Dr. Chalmers," i. 33.
[2] Memoir prefixed to "Sermons and Sacramental Exhortations."

this century agitated the Church. The chair of mathematics in the University of Edinburgh had become vacant by the translation of Professor Playfair to the chair of natural philosophy. There were several candidates, amongst others Mr. Chalmers, minister of Kilmany.[1] But the two principal candidates were Mr. Macknight, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, son of the eminent commentator, and Mr. (afterwards Sir) John Leslie. Mr. Macknight was a highly respectable man, and an able mathematician; but Mr. Leslie had already shown pre-eminent attainments in this science. He had made some ingenious discoveries in the properties of heat; the Royal Society had bestowed upon him one of their most distinguished honours, the Rumford Gold Medal; and he was recommended for the appointment by some of the most distinguished scientists in the kingdom.[2] The Town Council of Edinburgh were the patrons of the chair, and it soon transpired that they were likely to consider the claims of Mr. Leslie as transcending those of any of the other candidates. Mr. Macknight withdrew, but not before Professor Playfair, the previous holder of the chair, had indicated his conviction that no man in the position of a clergyman could adequately follow out and teach such a science as that of mathematics. Dugald Stewart also, the well-known professor of moral philosophy, and the biographer of Principal Robertson, took the same view. Some of the ministers of Edinburgh, however, strongly supported Mr. Macknight; indeed it almost seems as if to some extent they were chagrined at the insinuations against the ability of their order thrown out by Professor Playfair and Professor Stewart. Not contented therefore with supporting Mr. Macknight's candidature so long as he remained on the field, they unfortunately resolved to throw every obstacle in the way of Mr. Leslie's appointment, after Mr. Macknight had withdrawn. They accordingly fastened upon a note appended to the "Essay on Heat," in which Mr. Leslie warmly commended Hume's argument on causation. They asserted that this statement indicated the author to be tainted with Hume's scepticism, and that he was not a proper person to be entrusted with the education of young men. Mr. Leslie declared that, while he had avowed his admiration of

[1] Hannah's "Life," i. 91.

[2] Cunningham's "Hist." ii. 600.

the argument, he did not accept the sceptical conclusions which had been drawn from it, and that it was no part of his purpose to point out the bad uses that had been made of it, in theological science. But it was of no avail that he disclaimed the scepticism attributed to him. The Edinburgh ministers brought the matter before the presbytery, although in their zeal against Mr. Leslie they seem to have laid themselves open to charges quite as heretical as they strove to fix upon him.[1] It was carried to the synod, and thence to the Assembly.

The popular party, greatly to their credit, espoused the cause of Mr. Leslie. For the time it seemed as if the principles of Moderatism had been abandoned by their customary defenders, and had been adopted by the other side. They were most ably stated by Sir Henry Moncrieff, the leader of the popular party. But the truth is that the Moderates were by no means united in their action. Professor Dugald Stewart, who warmly supported the principles of the party as led by Principal Robertson, was, as we have seen, entirely opposed to their action in the Leslie case. Principal Hill went along with his party in the General Assembly, but residing as he did at a distance from the leaders in Edinburgh, who from their position there were more closely conversant with the details of ecclesiastical affairs than it was possible for him to be, he sometimes allowed his own better judgment to be overborne by the less judicious counsels of members of the party not so profoundly versed in the true principles of moderation. It is certain that it was so in this instance. He says himself shortly afterwards that, in Mr. Leslie's case, he had yielded his own opinion as to the proper mode of terminating the business to the opinion of others.[2] It was certainly a departure from the liberal traditions of the Moderate party, who in former days had defied all obloquy in their defence of Simson, and Wishart, and Leechman, and by whose timely interposition Lord Kames and David Hume had been saved from excommunication.

The debate in the Assembly was most brilliant. Sir Henry Moncrieff led in favour of Mr. Leslie, supported by Adam Gillies and James Moncrieff, both afterwards distinguished in the legal world. The well-known judges, Lord

[1] Cunningham's "History," ii. 602. [2] Cook's "Life of Dr. Hill," 207.

President Campbell and Lord Hermand, spoke on the other side, with Dr. John Inglis, father of the present Lord President Inglis, then a rising luminary of the Moderate party. Principal Hill, it is said, was more than usually plausible; but his heart was not in the measure he supported. Dugald Stewart tried to speak in Leslie's favour, but unaccustomed to address the house, he got confused after the first few sentences, and speedily brought his remarks to a close. When the vote came to be taken, the Moderate party were defeated by a majority of twelve. It was the first time for many years that they had failed to carry the Assembly with them. They suffered in prestige and in loss of influence more than was indicated by the adverse vote of the Assembly. Enlightened public opinion was against them. The confidence of the country was shaken in the wisdom of their leaders.[1]

From this time forward, and for many years, the Moderate party showed all the symptoms of weakness. Principal Hill was nominally the leader; but the measures of the party were concerted by a few Edinburgh ministers, whose sagacity and knowledge of affairs by no means entitled them to press their own opinions, in opposition to that of so profound a constitutionalist as the Principal. Shortly after the Leslie case, a somewhat acrimonious discussion occurred between him and his Edinburgh colleagues, in regard to steps which they proposed should be taken by the Church, in the case of an augmentation of stipend. Principal Hill refused to comply with their wishes, as in his view eminently injudicious; and although there was no open breach, there was for long afterwards a lack of that sympathy between the leading members of the party so essential to its influence. On the other hand, the popular party began to show symptoms of increasing vigour. They had practically adopted the old Moderate policy in the Leslie case. In the question of patronage also they had, as we have seen, at last coincided with their former opponents, in so far as to regard it as a law which must be loyally worked. They had always been earnest in their ministerial labours, but they began now to manifest a still greater fervour in the

[1] See Cockburn's "Memorials;" Dugald Stewart's "Short Statement of Facts;" *Edinburgh Review*. No. xiii.

discharge of their functions. Such zeal had been but seldom apparent in the calm and unimpassioned utterances of the other side. It commended itself to the popular taste, and attracted the sympathy of the people.

The most noted champions of the popular party at this time, and for long afterwards, were Andrew Thomson and Thomas Chalmers. Thomson, after having charge successively of the parish of Sprouston and of the East Church of Perth, was promoted to Edinburgh in 1810. He at first occupied the charge of the new Greyfriars parish in that city, but in 1814 he was transferred to the fine church of St. George's, then just completed for the accommodation of the large population, which had begun rapidly to occupy the delightful suburban residences of the New Town of Edinburgh. In this position his powers had full scope. His large church was speedily crowded with the most intellectual and cultured congregation which Scotland could produce. A powerful and popular preacher, a vigorous debater, a generous philanthropist, an ardent, yet at the same time a judicious, supporter of popular rights, he wielded an overwhelming influence for the twenty years of his ministry in St. George's, until it was prematurely cut short by his sudden death.

Chalmers was still at this time minister of the rural parish of Kilmany; but the marvellous spiritual change had already passed upon him which his biographer has so graphically described; and the fame of the splendid oratory with which he, quickened by the Spirit of God, was entrancing multitudes, was soon to carry him to the scene of his unparalleled success in the great western metropolis. Along with a few like-minded friends, notably Mr. Chalmers and Mr. M'Crie, Dr. Thomson had begun to issue an ecclesiastical periodical called the *Christian Instructor*, shortly after he came to Edinburgh. It professed to be a magazine of religious communications, reviews of books, literary and scientific intelligence, ecclesiastical information, and missionary records.[1] It was conducted by Dr. Thomson from its commencement, in 1810, till his death, in 1831. The idea was entirely new in the Church of Scotland, for the power of the press in religious and ecclesiastical matters was not then

[1] *Christian Instructor*, new series, vol. i., preface.

understood. It speedily acquired influence, and it contributed very largely to the promulgation of the popular principles, which gradually acquired the ascendency in the Church.

The question of "pluralities," or the holding of more than one office by ministers, now began to come prominently forward. In 1800 Dr. Arnot, professor of divinity in St. Andrews, was presented to Kingsbarns, a parish six or seven miles away. His induction was opposed, but the opposition collapsed. A fresh case, however, now arose. Mr. Ferrie, professor of civil history in St. Andrews, was presented to Kilconquhar, a parish twelve miles distant. With such facilities of locomotion as existed in those days, it was evident that residence in the parish, during the college session, would be impossible for the minister. The presbytery, therefore, refused to induct him, unless he promised to demit his position in the university. This Mr. Ferrie declined to do, and the case went up to the Assembly. It was given in Mr. Ferrie's favour, but only by the narrow majority of five.[1]

The ground upon which this decision was arrived at was that there was no special ecclesiastical law forbidding non-residence. It was argued by the minority that a special law was not required; it was against the common law of the Church, and that was sufficient. But when Mr. Ferrie's case went against them, they resolved that a special law should be created without delay. The case was certainly an extreme one, and it is not surprising that the indignation and alarm of the Church were easily aroused. An overture accordingly came before the Assembly of 1814, from the Synod of Angus and Mearns, praying the supreme court to make such an enactment as should prevent the recurrence of such cases as that of Kilconquhar. There was a keen debate, and it ended in a Declaratory Act being passed, setting forth that it was inconsistent with the fundamental laws of the Church for a minister to hold any office, which required him to reside beyond his parish.

This Act was passed as a Declaratory Act—*i.e.* an Act which declares what is the already existing law of the Church. It was therefore at once placed upon the records, for it is only when an entirely new law is proposed, that the Barrier Act

[1] Cunningham's "Hist.," ii. 611; Hetherington's "Hist.," 708.

requires the proposal to be first sent down for the consideration and approval of presbyteries. But many sound Church lawyers, when they had time and opportunity to reflect upon the subject, came to the conclusion that the Act in question was not declaratory, but that it was really a new piece of legislation, and as such ought to have been sent down to presbyteries in terms of the Barrier Act. This question was discussed at great length in the Assembly of 1816. Principal Hill held strongly that the legislation of the previous year was a violation of the Barrier Act, and urged that the proposal as to non-residence be framed into an overture and sent down to presbyteries in the usual way. But the Moderate party were divided in their councils. Principal Hill was met by a member of his own party, Dr. George Cook, of Laurencekirk, the historian of the Reformation and of the Church, and destined ultimately to become Principal Hill's successor in Church matters, and to lead the Moderate party in a difficult and trying crisis. In an able and learned speech, which was afterwards published, Dr. Cook contended that residence was comprehended in the constitution of the Church, and that nothing more than a Declaratory Act was required in the circumstances.[1] Principal Hill appears to have again been influenced by his friends in Edinburgh, who were resolved to maintain the absolute propriety of the union of offices, regardless of the question of parochial residence.[2]

An agitation was, however, immediately raised against the Declaratory Act, as subversive of the principles of the Barrier Act—the palladium of the liberty of presbyteries. Overtures came in from various quarters to the Assembly of 1816, praying that it should be rescinded. The Edinburgh ministers encouraged the movement, evidently in the hope that the opposition to pluralities, of whatever kind, would be absolutely put down. In this, however, they were mistaken. All the more sagacious members of the Moderate party, notably Principal Hill and Dr. Cook, had always, in the strongest terms, repudiated any such union of offices as implied the non-residence of a minister in his parish. They were too well aware of the

[1] "Inquiry into the Law and Constitution of the Church of Scotland respecting Residence and Pluralities," by George Cook, D.D., F.R.S.E.

[2] Cook's "Life of Principal Hill," 179.

benefit arising to a parish from the residence of the clergyman amongst the people to whom he ministers, not to be assured that any infringement of that salutary practice would be the ruin of the Church. Dr. Hill accordingly renewed his motion disapproving of the Declaratory Act; but he added to it the important clause—that an overture be drawn up and sent down to presbyteries, for preventing the improper union of offices. His motion was carried by a large majority. He himself drew up the overture, which details the evil of non-residence, and enacts that no one shall hold both a parochial charge and a professorship, unless the parochial charge is situated either in the city which is the seat of the university, or in its suburbs. The overture was transmitted in due course. A large majority of the presbyteries declared in favour of its provisions—notwithstanding certain efforts made to oppose it—and by the Assembly of 1817 it was passed as a standing law of the Church. It remains the law of the Church on the subject to the present day.[1]

But the opponents of pluralities were not satisfied with this measure. They were resolved that they should be absolutely abolished. They asserted that a clergyman's time must be wholly occupied with the duties of his sacred profession, and that it was impossible for the occupant of a chair to adequately perform the duties of a parochial charge also. They soon had an opportunity of endeavouring to apply this sweeping principle.

In 1823 Principal Macfarlan, of the University of Glasgow, had been presented, by the Crown, to the High Church parish in that city. When the presentation came to be considered by the presbytery, it was found that there was a strong opposition on the part of several members to its being sustained. The opposition was headed by Dr. M'Gill, the professor of divinity, and by Dr. Chalmers. The former had only a few years before demitted the charge of the Tron parish, when he entered upon the work of his theological chair. The latter was in the full swing of his herculean labours in St. John's. He had added to his regular ministerial labours the care of the poor of that immense parish, although for many years that work had not devolved upon the ministers of the Church. The fame of his eloquence was, if possible, almost surpassed by his fame as a

[1] Acts of Assembly, vi., 1817.

political economist, and organizer of parochial work. He had propounded the theory that a cure of a thousand souls was sufficient to tax the energies of any one man. He had begun his great church extension scheme on this principle. It was little wonder, therefore, that he warmly opposed the union of the offices of principal of the university and minister of the large and squalid parish of St. Mungo's.[1] The Presbytery of Glasgow listened to his arguments, and refused to sustain Dr. Macfarlan's presentation. The Synod of Glasgow and Ayr confirmed the decision of the presbytery. But when the case came up by appeal to the General Assembly of 1824, it was carried by a large majority that the sentence of the presbytery be reversed, and that Principal Macfarlan be admitted minister of the High Church.

The opponents of pluralities, however, nothing daunted, brought the question again before the Supreme Court in 1825, by overtures from presbyteries and synods. A brilliant debate ensued. Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Andrew Thomson, and their friends of the popular party, put forth all their strength. They were met by solid argument. In the course of the discussion Mr. Fleming of Neilston read a paragraph from a pamphlet of which Dr. Chalmers was the reputed author, in reply to the statements by Professor Playfair in the Leslie case, in which he asserted that after the full discharge of his parochial duties a minister might have five days a week to devote to any pursuit he thought fit to follow after. Amid breathless silence, Dr. Chalmers, in his reply, acknowledged the authorship of the pamphlet, and expressly recalled the statements he had hazarded, with every expression of regret.[2] By a majority of twenty-six in a very large house the overtures were thrown out.[3] Again, in 1826, similar overtures were brought up, and another debate ensued, in which Dr. Cook, now the leader of the Moderates, took part. This time, by the decisive majority of fifty-four, the overtures were again dismissed. A royal commission had been appointed, and the discussion was not resumed. This commission reported some time afterwards against the expediency of the union of offices.[4] The

[1] Hannah's "Life of Chalmers," ii. 397–400.
[2] See printed report of the debate.
[3] Ibid. The numbers were 145 to 119.
[4] Report of Universities Commission.

law of the Church, however, remains as settled by the Act of 1817. Since that time the union of a chair with a parochial charge has been repeated in several cases, without detriment either to the university or the parish. The truth here, as in almost all such cases, lies in the middle, and not at either extreme. Non-residence cannot possibly subsist without serious damage to parochial interests. There are parishes also in large towns, whose duties are so overwhelming, that no man in charge of them could undertake further work of any kind with propriety. These overgrown parishes are, however, in themselves an abuse, and ought not to exist. Happily, provision can now be made for their proper subdivision. But where a city parish is of such normal extent that all its duties can be fairly overtaken without the ruinous expenditure of labour which is adverse to the best interests alike of minister and people, it seems as if such duties as those of a university chair might fairly be added without detriment. The instances are too numerous to quote in which the most efficient parish ministers have also been able and distinguished professors. The most brilliant advocates of the abolition of pluralities were, strange to say, in other ways than the occupation of university chairs, themselves noted pluralists. The publications undertaken by Dr. Chalmers, while he was acting as a parish minister, must have occupied him to the full as much as the duties of an ordinary theological chair could be supposed to do. Dr. Thomson's editorship of the *Christian Instructor* must have implied an expenditure of time and labour, during the entire course of his brilliant ministry in St. George's, far in excess of that of any divinity professor in the university. No definite rule can be laid down. The circumstances of each case must decide whether a union of such offices is legitimate.

It was now upwards of a quarter of a century since the General Assembly declined to go forward to the work of Foreign Missions. They had recorded their resolution to do so when the proper time should arrive.[1] During that period a great change had passed over religious thought. The mind of the Church at large had grasped the truth, that the world had a claim upon its sympathies and its energies. A missionary wave

[1] See Chap. xxix.

had risen. It reached other Christian lands before ours; but it reached Britain at last. It reached Scotland. The Church of Scotland required to be educated, as did other churches, in the necessity for the work. The process began during those twenty-five years. The accounts of missionary enterprise, the narratives of the doings of such devoted men as Carey, and Judson, and Brainerd, and Henry Martin, had begun to excite an enthusiasm in the Christian people. The clergy participated in the pious sentiment. It soon found expression in the Church courts. One of the most prominent leaders of the Moderate party, Dr. John Inglis, minister of Old Greyfriars, Edinburgh, was the man who had the distinguished honour of proposing the Church's scheme of foreign missions to the General Assembly, and of carrying it into effect. He was a man of sterling common sense, and of fervent piety. He had thoroughly grasped the principles of Moderatism in church polity, and uniformly gave them his hearty and able support. He was a zealous churchman, and the Church is indebted to him for one of the ablest defences of church establishments in the language.[1] He was recognized also as a powerful preacher of evangelical truth—one of that numerous band of preachers who so amply vindicated the Moderate party from the charge, so often preferred against them, of giving but an uncertain sound on the momentous topics which it is the duty of every minister to enforce. It was a happy omen for the success of missionary enterprise in the Church of Scotland, that it was projected not by a mere enthusiast, but by a man of so pre-eminently "sound mind" as Dr. Inglis.

It was in 1824 that he first brought the subject before the General Assembly. There was no opposition. Dr. Bryce, the first chaplain of the Church of Scotland at Calcutta, was at home on furlough. His knowledge of Indian affairs was of invaluable service in the deliberations of the Assembly. It is pleasant to remember that in the inauguration of the great enterprise, the Assembly was unanimous. The two parties seemed for the moment to be merged into one. A committee was appointed to organize a scheme of operations. The policy which has since been pursued by the committee—viz. a union of educational with evangelistic work—may be said to have been originated, and

[1] "A Defence of Church Establishments," by John Inglis, D.D.

the main features of it sketched out, by Dr. Inglis. The scheme was before the Assembly in 1825, and again in 1826. A pastoral address, from the pen of Dr. Inglis, on the subject of missions was issued, and read in all the congregations of the Church. Collections were made throughout the parishes, with the result that the Church found herself in the possession of sufficient funds to warrant her in going forward. In answer doubtless to the prayers of the people, the man required to represent the Church in the mission was raised up. Newly licensed to preach the Gospel, of noted capacity as a student, inspired by the enthusiasm of Chalmers, at whose feet he had sat in St. Andrews—fired by an apostolic zeal in the cause of the Great Master, Alexander Duff, a mere youth, but wise beyond his years, was ordained in 1829 as the Church of Scotland's first missionary to the heathen, and immediately set sail for the sphere of his labours. The brilliant commencement of so sacred a movement was the prophecy of its still more brilliant career.

A controversy took place about this time which, although it is now almost forgotten, excited much interest and not a little bitterness. The British and Foreign Bible Society, which had been instituted to promote the circulation of the Scriptures at home and abroad, had been kept in funds, and supported generally, upon the understanding that its work should be to disseminate the pure word, without note or comment of any kind.[1] It transpired, however, that the directors of the Society, sitting in London, had thought fit for many years to publish the Apocryphal books along with the Authorized Scriptures, and also to append notes of questionable orthodoxy, and to prefix prefaces to some of their issues, calculated to undermine the faith. Robert Haldane, to whom we have referred in the last chapter, was the first to detect this practice, and to protest against it. He was by this time widely known. His character as a philanthropist and a preacher of evangelical truth was firmly established, and he had recently greatly added to his repute by the publication of a treatise on the Epistle to the Romans. His remonstrance therefore came with no slight weight. He speedily found an able coadjutor in Dr. Andrew Thomson, who was acting as secretary for the Edinburgh Bible Society.

[1] Cunningham's "History," ii. 616.

Dr. Thomson at once opened the pages of the *Christian Instructor* to the controversy, and scattered his own views and those of his supporters broadcast over the Church. The Society defended its doings, upon the plea that it gained access to a constituency, which it could not possibly have reached except by this means. Dr. Thomson threw himself into the dispute with his accustomed energy. All his stores of humour, and all his powers of sarcasm, were brought into requisition. The articles in the *Instructor* were full of manly reasoning, often, too, of pungent satire. It was eagerly bought up as soon as it issued from the press. Unfortunately some matters of a personal character became mixed up with the original dispute, which Dr. Thomson followed out with unsparing invective. They imparted a piquancy to the contention, which undoubtedly enhanced its interest, although those, who most enjoyed the raciness of the conflict, could not but regret the temper which was displayed in regard to so sacred a subject. As it matured, the controversy became more serious. Doubts were cast upon the canon of Scripture, and statements were made tending to disquiet the minds of the people, as to the authority of Holy Writ. It resulted in the exclusion of the Apocrypha from the publications of the British and Foreign Bible Society; but there was an unfortunate rupture both in the London Society and in that of Edinburgh. Personal animosities were also created, which it took long to allay.[1]

One of the most extraordinary, and in some respects most important, religious developments of modern days began about this time. Five or six years before, a young clergyman, Mr. John M'Leod Campbell, had been settled in the beautiful parish of Row, on the banks of the Gareloch, near the mouth of the Clyde. He had been reared in the atmosphere of an evangelical manse. His father was minister of Kilninver, in Argyllshire, and adhered to the popular party in the Church. Naturally serious and earnest, Mr. Campbell was much impressed with the responsibility of the sacred office of the ministry. The popular evangelical doctrine failed to satisfy him. Shrinking from the crude and materialistic mode in which the

[1] See the *Edinburgh Christian Instructor* of the period; pamphlets; "Lives of the Haldanes."

Calvinistic system was often described, and even proclaimed from the pulpit, he proceeded to study the Scriptures for himself. The result was that he soon acquired a deep insight into the sacred writings, which enabled him to discern a significance in many parts which had not been popularly attached to them. But he also adopted certain views of Divine truth which were, ostensibly, not altogether accordant with the tenets of the Church. His unquestionable earnestness and fervent piety were warmly acknowledged on all hands; and his ingenious expositions of Scripture, in which he shed a flood of new light on many intricate and difficult passages, were gladly welcomed by the more devout. But the cast of thought at the time was somewhat contracted. The Moderate party were by no means the dominant power they had been fifty years before. Many of those who nominally adhered to it, and assumed its name, were not influenced by its true principles, and they had not imbibed the tolerant views which had so long characterized it. The popular party were wedded, for the most part, to the received traditions of Calvinism—or what was commonly supposed to be Calvinism. Their more distinguished clergy preached that system with power and fervour. They all held that it contained the essence of revealed truth, and therefore that even the slightest departure from it was fraught with danger.

The parish of Row was then, as it is still, although now in a much greater degree, the summer resort of many of the Glasgow merchants, attracted thither by the beauty of the scenery and the salubrity of the climate. Rumours of Mr. Campbell's divergences from the ordinary doctrine were soon, therefore, widely spread. The religious world became alarmed. Mr. Campbell's friends held conferences with him, with the view of persuading him to modify some of his statements. But he believed that he had received a light upon things sacred which it became him to make known. His style was intricate, and this unquestionably tended to give a wrong impression of what he believed and taught. At length the excitement could no longer be overlooked. The presbytery were called upon to interfere, and they did so. Their bearing towards their erring brother was not over-courteous, according to the account given of their proceedings by a warm sympathizer and friend of Mr.

Campbell.[1] The charges were formulated, and in due course found proven—that Mr. Campbell had entertained and promulgated the doctrine of universal atonement and pardon through the death of Christ, and also the doctrine that assurance is of the essence of faith and necessary to salvation.[2] Mr. Campbell himself repudiated the assertion that he preached universal pardon in the objectionable Antinomian sense, that there is a universal act of indemnity to sinners through the death of Christ, irrespective altogether of their moral character. He averred that his statements amounted only to this, that in every case the judicial barrier interposed by sin between God and man is taken away by Christ.[3] He also gave reasonable explanations of his teaching upon assurance.

The charges against Mr. Campbell were, in some measure, similar to those preferred against the Marrow men more than a hundred years before. The popular party, of that day, protested strongly against the injustice of attributing to the Marrow men doctrines which they declared they did not teach. Their successors in 1831 had no such scruples. They accepted the testimony of others as to what Mr. Campbell had taught; they did not conceive themselves called upon to consider what *he* said he had intended to teach. There is little doubt that his language was somewhat unguarded. When the case came before the Assembly the charges were held to be proven, by so sagacious a divine as Dr. George Cook. But the proceedings of this Assembly, in which the two great parties united for the time, were very different from the proceedings during last century, in the cases of the "Marrow" and of Professor Simson. The Assembly considered the charges in these instances, with the utmost care. It was years before they came to a final decision. The Marrow men were left untouched; the book only was condemned. When the Assembly of 1831 took up the Row case, they finished it in one day. They expended the greater part of that time on preliminary points. It was long after midnight before they proceeded to the merits of the case. The evidence extended to four or five hundred pages. The great majority of the members had left the house, naturally feeling

[1] See Professor Story's "Robert Story of Rosneath," chaps. iii. and iv.
[2] Ibid. 166. [3] "Robert Story of Rosneath." 166.

that so important a trial must be postponed till the next day. It was in these circumstances that the motion for deposition was made and carried, against a motion for suspension, by 119 to 6.[1]

It would be difficult to understand the excitement which Mr. Campbell's utterances had excited, and the alarm of the Church at them, if we were to leave out of account significant incidents of a different character that were taking place on the opposite bank of the Gareloch during the time when Mr. Campbell was so conspicuously before the religious public, that were ultimately associated with events occurring elsewhere, and with which it was vaguely rumoured Campbell was in sympathy.

Edward Irving, who was the not over-popular assistant to Dr. Chalmers in St. John's, Glasgow, at the time when that eminent divine was in the midst of his wonderful parochial and evangelical labours, had been settled in the Scottish Church, Hatton Garden, London, in the summer of 1822, only a few years before Mr. Campbell was ordained at Row. Very shortly after he went there he developed into the most popular preacher of the day. The little chapel at Hatton Garden was crowded every Sunday with the *élite* of the metropolis. A larger edifice had to be provided, and the National Scottish Church, Regent Square, since associated with some notable names, was erected for Irving. For a time all went well. No man exercised a more powerful influence upon the great city than did the Scottish preacher. But ere long his steps began to wander. He had been induced to make the subject of prophecy a special study, and in the course of his researches he convinced himself that the second coming of the Saviour was close at hand. His preaching, in this view, assumed a mystic grandeur of conception and utterance that rendered it still more impressive than before. But the conviction he had arrived at was conjoined with the belief that previous to the advent, and as a sign of its approach, the spiritual "gifts" would be restored to the Church, which had so long been withheld from it. For these manifestations he anxiously looked and prayed. It was only the sins of Christians and their unbelief that prevented their manifestation.

[1] "Robert Story of Rosneath," 173.

Suddenly, on the banks of the Gareloch, while Campbell was preaching his new doctrine, the "gifts" were reported to have appeared. A young woman named Isabella Campbell had died shortly before, after displaying unusual spiritual grace. Her memoir, written by the parish minister of Rosneath, had had a wide circulation, and had attracted many to the scene of her devout experiences. Her sister Mary had adopted Mr. Irving's views; and her consultations with those who came to her place of residence—many of whom were disciples of Irving—confirmed her in her belief. Ere long she declared that the "gifts" had been poured out. She uttered sounds which none could interpret, but which she herself believed to be the "tongues" of Pentecost. Healing of the sick, both in her own case and that of others, speedily followed. The tidings reached London. Irving felt that his prayers had been answered. By and by similar manifestations developed themselves in his own congregation. At first he attempted to restrain them, but the "gifted" would not be restrained. Scenes of the direst confusion were enacted at almost every service. The more sober-minded of his people besought him to interpose, and when he refused they appealed to the presbytery, which ejected him from his church. Then the church courts in Scotland took up the case. The Presbytery of Annan, which had ordained him, had the ecclesiastical jurisdiction over him. He was said to have wandered into doctrinal error, as well as into these extravagances; at anyrate he had used language that admitted of the interpretation that the human nature of the Saviour was liable to sin. The Presbytery of Annan investigated the matter, and notwithstanding his declaration that this was not his doctrine, they found the charge proven; and in the same parish church where he had been baptized and ordained, he was deposed from the ministry. The people whom he had trained in his mystical views of prophecy and the "gifts" now ruled him with a rod of iron. For a time they would not suffer him to resume his old ministry among them, and to preach, because he had not received the "gifts." At last he was stricken with a deadly malady, and came down to Scotland to die. He died in Glasgow, and was buried in the crypt of the old cathedral.[1]

[1] I have condensed this short narrative chiefly from Mrs. Oliphant's "Life of Irving."

There is no indication that Mr. Campbell sympathized with Irving's extravagances. But he knew and loved Irving, and the "gifts" first appeared in his own neighbourhood. It is. thus, not surprising that his doctrine and that of Irving should have been regarded as intertwined, and that he may have been all the more hardly dealt with on this account.

Two nobler characters have seldom been seen in any Church. Campbell founded no sect, but for many years he continued to preach his doctrine with growing maturity. And while there are those in the Church who may recognize points in which it is defective, and refuse to follow him into some of his theories, there are many more who recognize in his teaching the first germ of a more spiritual conception of the grand doctrine of the atonement, than had ever before been realized in Scotland. Irving's vaguer movement has developed into the imposing reality of the so-called Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. And if in like manner there are many who cannot sympathize with all its gorgeous ritual and its mystical belief, there are many also who are grateful to its founder for having brought into prominence points in the faith which had been obscured and kept in the background, most especially that beautiful truth, so essential to a true idea of the plan of salvation —the veritable humanity of our blessed Lord.

CHAPTER XXXI.

FROM THE VOLUNTARY CONTROVERSY TO THE CLOSE OF THE FIRST AUCHTERARDER CASE.

Growth of the popular party—Catholic Relief Bill—Reform Bill of 1832—The Voluntary controversy—Anti-patronage societies—Overtures on calls—The Chapel Act—The Veto Act—Church extension—Endowment of the chapels—Auchterarder case—Veto exercised—Appeal to the civil courts—Lethendy case—Court of Session pronounces Veto illegal—Assembly of 1838—Mr. Buchanan's declaration of spiritual independence—Lethendy case handed over to the commission—Bicentenary of Glasgow Assembly of 1638—Appeal to the House of Lords in Auchterarder case—Decision of the Court of Session confirmed—Assembly of 1839—Dr. Cook's motion to revert to practice before the Veto—Dr. Chalmers' motion to adhere to the Veto—Dr. Muir's motion to reconcile both parties—Dr. Chalmers' motion carried—Inconsistency and unwisdom of the motion.

THE popular party was now rapidly increasing in numbers and influence. It comprehended the most brilliant orators and some of the most indefatigable workers in the Church. Its most redoubted champion was, indeed, no more. Dr. Andrew Thomson had dropped down dead at his own door on the 9th of February, 1831—an irreparable loss, alike to the party to which he adhered, and to the Church at large. But Chalmers was in even more than his former vigour: set free now from the constant labours of parochial work, and occupying one of the most prominent positions in the Church, as professor of theology in the University of Edinburgh. Many others also, of scarcely inferior power, might be named who had proved their attachment to their party through many years; some who had not yet made themselves known, but who were very shortly to take a foremost place both in counsel and in debate.

The Church was vigorous, and was rising to a usefulness and an influence which she had never before exercised. Missions to the heathen were recognized to be a duty. The means of grace amongst the home population were being rapidly increased; parochial economics and evangelistic methods were receiving careful and intelligent study. But it became evident about this time that the Church was henceforth to encounter a species of opposition to which she had not previously been subjected. The Seceders had been gradually increasing in numbers;

but they had departed from their original position. When they separated from the Church they had not repudiated church principles. On the contrary, they asserted strongly their attachment to the theory of the alliance of Church and State, and it was only because of what they looked upon as special and accidental evils in the Church that they thought fit to abandon her. They continued to hold these views for many years. But when a religious body is practically demonstrating that it is possible to exist, and to do good work, apart from any state alliance, it is natural that its adherents should drift into the belief that such an alliance is useless, and as this gains firmer hold, to go on to satisfy themselves that it is wrong. The original seceders were broken up, as we saw, into Burghers and Anti-burghers. It was amongst the Burghers that ideas antagonistic to the principle of establishments first appeared. They debated the points in dispute for some years, and at last, in 1799, a majority of the synod adopted a modification of the old form of subscription, which relieved them from any concurrence in the doctrine of the Confession of Faith upon the powers of the civil magistrate. A minority, however, dissented from this new departure, and formed themselves into a separate body, calling themselves Old Light Burghers.

A similar movement took place amongst the Anti-burghers about the same time. On several particulars they evinced a desire to modify their standards. The relation of the civil magistrate to the Church was one of them. They adopted a new "Narrative and Testimony" in 1804, in which this and other points were revised to suit their newer views; and when Dr. M'Crie and a few others dissented from this determination, and, separating from the original body, formed themselves into the Constitutional Associate Presbytery, the Anti-burghers deposed them from the office of the ministry, and excommunicated Dr. M'Crie.[1] Both the Burghers and the Anti-burghers, therefore, had now fairly professed the Voluntary principle. Sixteen years later, in 1820, they agreed to forget their differences and become one, under the name of the United Secession Church. Voluntaryism was, of course, one of the accepted principles of this denomination, and as time passed on its ad-

[1] Cunningham's "Hist.," ii. 449.

herents began to act on the aggressive, and to press their recently adopted principle upon the notice of the Christian public.

Concurrent events tended to encourage the movement towards Voluntaryism. A wave of liberal progress had begun to rise; by which some people feared that too many of the old landmarks might be swept away. The Roman Catholic Relief Bill was passed in 1829. All the cruel proscription under which the Romanists laboured for so long was now removed. They might perform their religious rites as they pleased, and they were admitted to every civil privilege enjoyed by their Protestant fellow-countrymen. Three years afterwards the first Reform Bill was passed.

But these great measures, which really accomplished a bloodless revolution, were not achieved without much controversy. Politicians who believed that even moderate and reasonable change was certain to lead to national ruin, spoke against the measures with all their eloquence, and obstructed them by every means in their power. The idea became prevalent that there was a party in the country who would not listen to any proposal for the rectifying of abuses. The force of popular opinion must make itself felt. So it came about that amongst many other matters calling for reform, the advocates of the new order included the question of the alliance of the Church with the State. Once broached, there was no question of the day that excited a deeper interest. By the time the century was thirty years old the Voluntary controversy—as it was called—was fairly begun. For the next few years it convulsed the country. The champions of Voluntaryism argued that it was no part of the duty of the State to maintain religion. Civil government existed only to maintain social order, and to preserve the due relations that must subsist in society. This was the abstract truth. In no circumstances could the State interfere in matters of conscience. But especially was this true in a country like ours, where the forms of belief are so many and so diverse, and where the support of one form of faith from the public resources seemed a hardship to such as had to support their own, without any pecuniary subsidy.

The defenders of the establishment based their argument for it upon Scripture and antiquity. They pointed to the manner

in which the Jewish Church was maintained, and to the fact that as soon as Christianity took a firm hold of men's minds it was established by the ruling power. They maintained that this alliance did not affect the Church's spiritual independence, because the establishment of religion was nothing more than a contract between two parties; the Church having first of all formulated her creed and her laws, and the State being bound by its alliance with her to protect her in their exercise. No State could refuse to enter into such an alliance. Every civil government was bound to see that the spiritual interests of its people were duly cared for. In no other way could the State rightly discharge its functions than by associating itself with the Church. Even if this should imply that the needful resources had to be levied from all without distinction, it would still be a duty to impose such levies, and there would be no hardship, since all alike might avail themselves, if they pleased, of the benefits of the State Church. But in this country no such levy was necessary, since the Church was not supported from taxes, but from the slender remains of her own once magnificent patrimony, only a remnant of which was left to her by the rapacity of the nobles. The controversy extended rapidly. Pamphlets and treatises, letters and articles followed each other in rapid succession. Public meetings were convened in every part of the country. Speeches of great eloquence—often also of much violence—were made. It was maintained by the Church party that they had worsted their opponents in argument; while the supporters of Voluntaryism, as might be anticipated, made a similar claim for themselves. But however that may have been, the result of the movement was not, on the whole, to strengthen the esteem in which the Church was held. People who had regarded the establishment principle as something inviolate and sacred, began to question whether their old belief in it was really well founded. They may have felt that the Church party had been on the whole victorious, but the question was evidently open to argument. And though in the abstract the position of a State Church might be invulnerable, were there not such defects in the existing establishment in Scotland as should warrant the outcry which her enemies had raised against her?

The controversy died down, but the effects of it remained. The minds of the people were disturbed. They had begun to question whether or not an Established Church was, indeed, a good thing. Churchmen and their friends had become seriously alarmed. The Moderate and the popular parties were alike earnestly desirous that every measure should be adopted to strengthen the Church. They were not at one as to the best mode of doing so, but they were heartily at one in their desire to commend the Church to the sympathies of the people.

The commencement of the movement, which was ultimately fraught with results so momentous, took place in 1832. For some years before this anti-patronage societies had been in operation. Some members of the popular party had come to the conclusion that there was no way of effectually popularizing the Church, but by agitating for the total abolition of this ancient grievance. The societies were not productive of much result, but they served to indicate the tendency of public opinion. But in 1832 eleven overtures from various synods and presbyteries came up to the Assembly, praying the court to take steps to have the call restored to what was called its constitutional efficiency.[1] A motion was made that they be remitted to a committee to report upon them. Principal M'Farlan, on the Moderate side, moved that it was inexpedient to entertain the overtures.[2] Their object was to make the call a necessary element in the settlement, and this, under the present law, had long been regarded as incompetent. Many of the Moderate party regretted, both at the time and afterwards, that a distinct declaration to this effect had not been made by the Assembly. Straightforward and unambiguous utterance has always its own reward.

Not discouraged by their reception in 1832, the popular party returned to the attack in 1833. This time no fewer than sixty-five overtures on the subject of the call came up to the Assembly. The popular party, rightly believing that the balance of power was almost in their hands, boldly moved that a committee be appointed to consider the best measures for preventing the induction of a presentee should a majority of the people dissent, with or without reasons. This motion was only lost by

[1] Dr. Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church of Scotland," vol. i. sec. 2. p. 14. [2] Ibid.

a majority of twelve. The motion was made by Dr. Chalmers in a speech full of pious sentiment, and pathetic sympathy with the difficulties of simple Christian folks, in stating objections they might be supposed to entertain to an unacceptable presentee. On this occasion the Moderate party were led by Dr. Cook, whose sagacity and deep knowledge of constitutional principle at once showed him the danger of the course proposed by Dr. Chalmers, but who was yet no less anxious than he that every facility should be afforded to the people to state reasonable objections, whenever they had them to state. It is due to the memory of that eminent man that the motion which he made should not be forgotten. It was in the following terms:—

"That in all cases in which a person is presented to a vacant benefice, it is by the law of this Church, sanctioned by the law of the land, competent for the heads of families, in full and regular communion with the Church, to give in to the presbytery within the bounds of which the vacant parish lies, objections, of whatever nature, against the presentee, or against the settlement taking place; that the presbytery shall deliberately consider these objections; and that if they find them unfounded, or originating from causeless prejudices, they shall proceed to the settlement. But if they judge that they are well founded, that they reject the presentation, the presentee being unqualified, it being competent to the parties to appeal from this sentence if they see proper."[1]

Many have questioned whether this Declaratory Act did not overstep the limits of the law. No opportunity was ever given to try the point. But at anyrate it indicates how strongly and how honestly the Moderate party desired to respect the rights of the people, and the privileges of church courts. But the popular party were not satisfied with this power of objection. They had resolved to fight the battle on the principle of the Veto; or, in other words, of making the dissent of a majority of the communicants in a parish, without reasons, a valid ground for the rejection of a presentee. They alleged that this was a preferable measure to one which should require a call, to be subscribed by a certain number of the communicants. It did not circumscribe the rights of patrons to the same extent. It did not ask the people to approve. It only gave effect to their dissent, if they should think proper to disapprove.

The Assembly of 1834 met in the Tron Church. It had pre-

[1] Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church of Scotland," vol. i. sec. 2, p. 15.

viously sat in a portion of St. Giles' appropriated to its use, and known as the "Assembly Aisle." But this meeting-place had been subjected to repairs and alterations during a so-called "restoration," and it was found utterly impossible to use it any longer as the Assembly house, from its defective acoustics. The beautiful building in which the Assembly now meets had not yet been erected, so that the venerable court had to locate itself where best it could, during the entire progress of the momentous "Ten Years' Conflict."

It was known that a vigorous struggle was to take place between the two parties, and the Assembly was looked forward to with unusual interest. The debate upon the Veto was preceded by one quite as critical to the interests of the Church. We have already seen that the necessities of the population had demanded the erection of places of worship, additional to the parish church, in populous centres. This process had been going on for many years, and it was emphasized by a proposal which Dr. Chalmers had set on foot to build a number of such churches in the city of Glasgow, where the church accommodation was admitted to be extremely deficient. Hitherto, however, the ministers of these chapels had not held the position of parish ministers. Their churches were called "chapels of ease." They did not sit in presbytery. They had no kirk-session, and their congregations were under the jurisdiction of the kirk-sessions of the parishes in which they were situated. The utility of these chapels was thus greatly circumscribed, and it was thought by some to be an anomaly that ministers, having the full ecclesiastical status, should not have the power to rule in the Church, as well as to preach the Gospel. It was proposed, therefore, that the Assembly should admit the chapel ministers to all the privileges of parish ministers; that it should assign a district and appoint a kirk-session for each of them, and allow the minister to be a constituent member of presbytery and synod, and to be eligible for election as a member of the General Assembly, just as the old parish ministers were. Many of those who were anxious for the prosperity of the church-extension movement favoured this proposal, because it was known that it would greatly help the cause of church extension. There were some also who favoured it, because they held that

it would be an answer to the allegations, made so continually during the Voluntary controversy, that the Church was fettered by its connection with the State. Such an Act would demonstrate its freedom. Others, still, were in favour of the proposal, because it was known that the chapel ministers in many cases adhered to the popular party, and a great accession to its influence would be the result of their admission to the ecclesiastical courts.

The Moderate party were fully alive to the necessity of taking steps to enlarge the parochial machinery of the country. But they saw that the proposal to admit the chapel ministers to the status of parish ministers, simply by an Act of the General Assembly, would be a violation of the contract between the Church and the State. The Church had entered into that contract in virtue of her own spiritual independence. She was free to withdraw from it whenever she saw fit. But so long as the contract subsisted, the Moderate party felt that it must be observed in every particular; and to adopt the proposal in question would be *ultra vires* of the Church. They therefore strongly opposed the proposal of the popular party. But they urged quite as strongly that the same end should be accomplished in a legal manner. They proposed that a committee should be appointed to correspond with Government, or the officers of the Crown, with a view to obtain a legislative enactment through which, with the consent of all parties interested, parishes might be divided, and districts assigned to chapels of ease, whenever the Church was satisfied that this was proper and necessary. They proposed, further, that steps should be taken to provide endowments for such chapels as it was deemed expedient to erect into parish churches. They desired also that the proposal should, in the first place, be sent down to presbyteries for their consideration.[1] The popular party had now, however, obtained the ascendency. Professor Brown of Aberdeen submitted the motion which shortly afterwards became the Chapel Act. Dr. Cook submitted the amendment which has been sketched. Professor Brown's motion was carried by 152 votes to 103. Many of the Moderate party dissented from the finding; and the more sagacious of the popular party disapproved of it. Dr. Chalmers and

[1] Acts of Assembly, Abridgment, p. 1035, note.

Dr. Gordon opposed it; and Dr. Patrick M'Farlan, the moderator of the Assembly, said in his closing address that he as strongly condemned that Act as he approved of the Veto.[1] Thus were parties divided upon the measure, which resulted in so grave an injury to the Church and to the country.

When this matter had been settled, the Assembly proceeded to the subject of the Veto. It was on the 27th of May that the debate upon this question took place. It was brought before the Assembly by an overture. Dr. Chalmers was not a member of this Assembly, and Lord Moncrieff was entrusted with the task of moving its adoption. He did so in a powerful speech, arguing that the old Acts of 1649 had not been repealed by the Act of 1712 re-imposing patronage; that by these Acts the people had practically the power of the Veto, and that these were still in force. Dr. Mearns, professor of divinity in King's College, Aberdeen, opposed Lord Moncrieff, and moved that the regulations for carrying out the Act of 1833 be adopted instead. Dr. Mearns was noted for his clear judgment and his power of calm reasoning. He maintained that the right of judging of the qualifications of a presentee belonged to the presbytery, and that the Veto would deprive the presbytery of this right, and transfer it to the people. If the Veto became law, the presbytery could do nothing more than minute the decision of the people, and that decision might be given without any reason being assigned for it. Dr. Cook followed with all his well-known ability, showing that the Veto was an infringement of statute law, and that it introduced an entirely new procedure. The present law of the Church, he also showed, abundantly protected the rights of the people, giving them the power of bringing forward any objection they pleased against a presentee.[2]

The debate was continued for twelve hours. It began at eleven o'clock in the morning, and it was not concluded till eleven o'clock at night, when Lord Moncrieff's motion was carried by a majority of forty-five—184 to 139. The Veto was accordingly declared to be an interim Act of the Church. It was sent down to presbyteries for their approval, and was changed into a permanent Act the following year. Its terms are as follows :—

[1] M'Farlan, "The Late Secession," 21.
[2] Dr. Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church of Scotland," section 2, chap. ii.

"The General Assembly declare that it is a fundamental law of this Church that no pastor shall be intruded on any congregation contrary to the will of the people; and in order that this principle may be carried into full effect, the General Assembly, with the consent of a majority of the presbyteries of this Church, do declare, enact, and ordain that it shall be an instruction to presbyteries, that if, at the moderating in a call to a vacant pastoral charge, the major part of the male heads of families, members of the vacant congregation and in full communion with the Church, shall disapprove of the person in whose favour the call is proposed to be moderated in, such disapproval shall be deemed sufficient ground for the presbytery rejecting such person, and that he shall be rejected accordingly, and due notice thereof forthwith given to all concerned; but that if the major part of the said heads of families shall not disapprove of such person to be their pastor, the presbytery shall proceed with the settlement according to the rules of the Church: and further declare that no person shall be held entitled to disapprove as aforesaid, who shall refuse, if required, solemnly to declare, in presence of the presbytery, that he is actuated by no factious or malicious motive, but solely by a conscientious regard to the spiritual interests of himself or the congregation."[1]

Such was the famous Veto Act. So certain were the Moderate party that the Assembly had acted illegally in adopting it, that Dr. Mearns, with no fewer than 105 members, entered his dissent from the finding, and caused this to be recorded. It was not, however, to be greatly wondered at that the popular party were misled. They had high authority for believing that their position was perfectly valid. The law officers of the Crown had intimated that they thought the Veto Act was competent. Lord Moncrieff, who moved it, was a judge of the Court of Session. It is said that Lord Brougham spoke of it as a wise and salutary measure, although he afterwards condemned it when he was Lord Chancellor.[2] This was strong support. The popular party may be pardoned if, in their anxiety for what they thought to be the interests of religion, they brought themselves to believe it outweighed that of Lord President Boyle, the Dean of Faculty, Mr. Hope, and such sagacious churchmen as Dr. Mearns and Dr. Cook.

The two Acts which have thus been sketched created a great amount of interest. They were regarded as liberal measures. They were an assertion of popular privileges. The Veto Act was an effectual check to the exercise of high-handed patronage. The Chapel Act raised the ministers of churches which had

[1] Acts of Assembly, 1834, Abridgment, p. 1037.

[2] "Memorial to Government," by the Moderator of the General Assembly, 1841.

been built for the people, and for which they could select the men whom they chose, to the same platform as was occupied by the old parish ministers. The Chapel movement, or as it now came to be called, the "Church Extension Scheme," went onwards by leaps and bounds. Dr. Brunton, in whose hands it had been, and who had been able to do but little for it, resigned the convenership of the committee. Dr. Chalmers was elected in his place. His fervid eloquence rang through Scotland. The people were aroused. Money flowed in. New churches were built and ministers placed in them. A year after he had been appointed, in the Assembly of 1835, he was able to report that sixty-four new churches had been completed or were in course of erection, and a grand total of £66,326 had been subscribed for the scheme.[1] It was indeed a splendid result of a single year's labour. In four years he had raised £200,000 and built 200 churches. Dr. Buchanan describes the acclamations with which the report of 1835 was received, and he tells how the Moderate party heard it without sharing in the vociferous applause. It was little wonder! However much they may have rejoiced in the addition to the machinery which the Church could now command, they saw how fearfully insecure the whole fabric was; every new church built, and every new parish erected on the false basis of the Chapel Act, they knew was in reality another element of weakness, which they could prophesy might involve their beloved National Church in irretrievable ruin. Chalmers wished to have these churches endowed. They were chiefly in poor localities. Endowment was necessary if they were to be really of use. Application was made to Government for a grant for this purpose. But the government of Lord Melbourne was not sympathetic. No adequate response was made to the petition of the Church. Chalmers' zeal was only equalled by his vexation at the coolness with which his cherished scheme was regarded in high places.[2]

It was not long before the fears of the Moderate party were realized and their predictions fulfilled. In August, 1834—less than three months after the Veto Act had been passed—

[1] Buchanan's "Ten Years' Conflict," i. 356.
[2] Hannah's "Memoirs of Chalmers," vol. ii. chap. xxiii.

the parish of Auchterarder became vacant, and on the 14th of October a presentation by the Earl of Kinnoull, the patron, in favour of Mr. Robert Young, was laid upon the table of the presbytery. It was well known at the time, although it is now forgotten, that the people of the parish had set their hearts on having a young man as their minister who had been acting as assistant in the parish, and who afterwards was a highly esteemed minister in the West of Scotland. For some reason, however, the patron resolved to appoint the gentleman named, a man of much ability and earnestness; and he was presented to the living accordingly. The Veto was now in operation as an interim Act, and the presbytery proceeded according to its provisions. The presentee preached, according to the regulations, on two several Sundays in the parish church. When the presbytery met to moderate in the call, it was subscribed by only three people, two of whom were parishioners and members of the congregation; the third was the patron's factor, or steward. The presbytery then called for any who wished to exercise the right of veto, when, out of 330 male heads of families, 287 appeared and recorded their names.[1] The presbytery had only one course to take, in virtue of the Act which was now the law of the Church. But there were some appeals on matters of detail. The case went to the synod, then to the Assembly of 1835—the very Assembly which converted the interim Veto Act into a law of the Church. The Assembly, however, found that the procedure of the presbytery had been quite regular, and instructed it to go on according to the provisions of the Act it had now to administer. On the 7th of July following the presbytery rejected Mr. Young accordingly.[2] An appeal was taken to the synod, but it was never prosecuted; for the patron and the presentee resolved to try the case in the civil courts. At first they only contemplated claiming the pecuniary fruits of the benefice, and asking the court to ordain the heritors to pay the stipend either to the presentee or the patron. This, however, was seen to be an untenable position, as the presentee had no right to the

[1] Minutes of the Presbytery of Auchterarder, quoted by Principal Cunningham, Hist., ii. 467.

[2] Ibid. Hist., ii. 466.

living until he was inducted; and the stipend during a vacancy went to the Widows' Fund. The terms of the action were therefore altered, and the court was asked to find that the presbytery "were bound and astricted to make trial of the qualifications of the pursuer," and if they found him qualified, to admit him as minister of Auchterarder; and further, that the rejection of the presentee without having taken him on trial, and solely on the veto of the parishioners, was injurious to the patrimonial rights of the presentee, and contrary to statute law.[1]

Before the Auchterarder case came into court another of a similar character was in preparation. The minister of Lethendy, in the Presbytery of Dunkeld, had applied for an assistant and successor. He asked that the appointment should be given to his assistant, Mr. Clark, and this request was supported by a petition signed by 107 male heads of families and communicants.[2] The patronage lay with the Crown, and the Crown issued a presentation in Mr. Clark's favour, in the usual way in such cases—viz. by sign manual. The presbytery sustained the presentation; but when they proceeded to Lethendy to moderate in the call, they discovered that the parishioners had changed their minds, and that fifty-three came forward to veto Mr. Clark, forty of whom had a few weeks before petitioned for him.[3] This was a majority of the male communicants, heads of families, whose names were upon the communion roll. The presbytery had but one course. According to the Veto law the presentee must be set aside. And so at the instance of the very people, who had deliberately asked the Crown to present him, he was rejected. Mr. Clark appealed. The case went to the synod and to the Assembly, but as a matter of course the finding of the presbytery was confirmed.

The old minister died in January, 1837.[4] In March the case was renewed, this time in the civil courts, by an action raised by Mr. Clark to have it declared that the presbytery were bound to have taken him on trial, and that they were still bound to do so. Meanwhile an unexpected complication arose.

[1] Cunningham's Hist., ii. 468. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.
[4] Buchanan, "Ten Years' Conflict," says he lived till November; Cunningham, Hist. ii. 469. note, corrects Buchanan, and gives the date as in the text.

The Crown authorities, for what reason is not known, but apparently under the impression that their former presentation was out of the way, issued a new presentation to a Mr. Kessen. The Non-intrusion party—as they now came to be called—not unnaturally accepted this as an admission that the Veto law was legal. The Moderate party, on the other hand, were indignant that so serious a complication should have been introduced into a case which was sufficiently difficult already. The presbytery seem to have been largely composed of the Non-intrusion party. They at once sustained Mr. Kessen's presentation, and took all the preliminary steps to have him settled. Before they could take the final step, however, Mr. Clark had obtained an interdict from the Court of Session prohibiting the presbytery from inducting Mr. Kessen to the benefice, and prohibiting Mr. Kessen from claiming any benefits which might accrue to him from his presentation.

The attention of the country now reverted to the Auchterarder case, which came before the Court of Session at the instance of Lord Kinnoull and Mr. Young. It was felt to be one of the most important cases that had ever been pleaded at the bar. The judges were fully aware of this, and resolved that it should be heard before the whole court. The Solicitor-General, Mr. Rutherford, who for many years adorned the bench as Lord Rutherford, appeared for the presbytery. Mr. Hope, the Dean of Faculty, afterwards Lord Justice Clerk, appeared for the patron and the presentee. Mr. Rutherford was one of the most acute reasoners, and one of the most polished speakers who had ever appeared at the Scottish bar. Mr. Hope was painstaking and laborious. Without any of the graces of oratory, he could marshal principles and facts, in such a manner that it was always difficult to rebut his arguments.

The pleadings began on the 21st of November, and were not concluded till the 12th of December. In the course of these lengthened proceedings the whole history of the Church, bearing upon the question, was reviewed. Mr. Rutherford pleaded that the court had no jurisdiction in such a case. Induction was a spiritual act. The civil court could not interfere with the decisions of the church courts in regard to it. The Church, of its own inherent power, had a right to pass the Veto Act. The

call had always been recognized as an element in the settlement of a minister, and the veto was only the negative form of the call. Mr. Hope, on the other hand, argued that the court was bound to declare the statute law of the country; that the Acts of 1592 and 1712 left the presbytery no alternative. They were bound to take the presentee on trials. They must be compelled to do so if they continued to refuse, for the presentee suffered serious loss in many ways by their refusal. The Assembly had no power to pass the Veto law. It was inconsistent with the statute law of the country, and the constitution of the Church.

The judges took more than two months to consider their decision. They were not unanimous, but the majority were in favour of the patron and the presentee. Eight held that the presbytery were bound to have taken the presentee on trials, to discover whether or not he was qualified to be minister of Auchterarder. Five, amongst whom was Lord Moncrieff, who had moved the Veto Act in the Assembly, gave it as their opinion that the Assembly was entitled to pass it, and that consequently the presbytery were entitled to reject the presentee. The opinions of the judges were given at great length. They showed that both the majority and the minority had been at the utmost pains to master the case. And when the court was so nearly balanced in opinion, with a minority consisting of such men as Lords Jeffrey, Cockburn, Moncrieff, Glenlee, and Fullarton, the Non-intrusion party may be excused for believing, as they did when they passed the Veto Act, that they were acting strictly within their province.[1]

The court pronounced its judgment on the 8th of March. It was in the following terms:—"Repel the objections to the jurisdiction of the court, and to the competency of the action as directed against the presbytery, . . . find that the Earl of Kinnoull has legally, validly, and effectually, exercised his right as patron of the church and parish of Auchterarder, by presenting the pursuer, the said Robert Young, to the said church and parish; find that the defenders—the Presbytery of Auchterarder—did refuse and continue to refuse to take trial of the qualifications of the said Robert Young, and have rejected him as presentee to the said church and parish on the sole ground

[1] See Robertson's "Report of the Auchterarder Case."

(as they admit on the record) that a majority of the male heads of families, communicants in the said parish, have dissented, without any reason assigned, from his admission as minister; find that the said presbytery in so doing have acted to the hurt and prejudice of the said pursuers, illegally, and in violation of their duty, and contrary to the provisions of certain statutes libelled on; and in particular, contrary to the provisions of the statute 10 Anne c. 12, entitled 'An Act to restore patrons to their ancient rights of presenting ministers to the churches vacant in that part of Great Britain called Scotland;' in so far repel the defences stated on the part of the presbytery, and decern and declare accordingly."[1]

Nothing could have been more fair or impartial than the trial of the Auchterarder case in the Court of Session. But as soon as it was known that the decision of the court was adverse to their own claims, the Non-intrusion party showed unmistakable symptoms of a determination to oppose themselves to the finding of the Court. It was not only that they spoke of endeavouring to have the decision reversed by an appeal to the House of Lords—that was a legitimate course, and natural in the circumstances; but they went much further. They began to assert that they were entirely independent of the civil courts, even in the matters which had been submitted; that as a church they had a right to pass the Veto Act, or any Act which had reference to spiritual things, and that the civil courts had no title to interfere and pronounce upon its legality or illegality.

Accordingly when the Assembly met in 1838, a few weeks after the decision of the Court of Session was pronounced, there were a number of overtures laid upon the table, asking it to declare that the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church was independent of state control. It was resolved that a declaration to this effect should be formally made by the Assembly; and now, when the Non-intrusion party resolved upon any course, through the strong majority they commanded by the introduction of the chapel ministers, they were certain to carry it. The subject was introduced to the Assembly by Mr. Buchanan, minister of the Tron parish, Glasgow, the future author

[1] Robertson's "Report of the Auchterarder Case."

of the "Ten Years' Conflict." His speech was able, and claimed for the Church, what no one ever denies, that she has inherent power to frame her own laws, and to regulate her own constitution; but it did not touch upon what was the vital point—whether or not, the Church having entered into contract with the State, the Veto Act was a violation of that contract? The motion with which Mr. Buchanan concluded was an assertion that in all matters touching the doctrine, government, or discipline of this Church, her judicatories possess an exclusive jurisdiction founded on the Word of God; that they would assert and defend this spiritual jurisdiction, and the supremacy and sole headship of the Lord Jesus Christ; and that they would firmly enforce submission to this upon the office-bearers and members of this Church by the execution of her laws, in the exercise of the ecclesiastical authority wherewith they are invested.[1]

The amendment upon this declaration was moved by Dr. Cook. It pledged the Assembly to hold sacred and inviolate the spiritual powers conferred upon the Church by the Lord Jesus Christ, her great Head; but it set forth, at the same time, the duty of all classes, but especially of the members and office-bearers of a church established and supported by the State, to yield obedience to existing laws declared by the supreme legal tribunals of the country to relate to and to regulate civil and temporal rights, privileges, and possessions, to whomsoever pertaining; and as regards the decision in the Auchterarder case, that it was most desirable it should be brought under review of the House of Lords, so that all doubts as to the import of the statutes on which it was founded might be removed. This amendment was lost, on a division, by a majority on the other side of 183 to 142.

Dr. Cook said in his speech that the "sting of Mr. Buchanan's amendment was in the tail." And this was true. For the concluding portion of the declaration plainly foreshadowed the policy, which the Non-intrusion party afterwards followed out so mercilessly, of attempting to enforce their own views of the law by the severest censures of the Church. The Assembly may be said to have begun this process as soon as the Declara-

[1] An outline of the speech and the motion are given in Buchanan's "Ten Years' Conflict," 470–479.

tion of Independence was adopted. The presentee to Auchterarder, Mr. Young, had appeared before the presbytery after the decision of the Court of Session, and had demanded to be taken on trials. The presbytery referred the matter to the synod; upon which Mr. Young's agent took a protest in the hands of a notary, that the members of presbytery would be liable to him in damages.[1] The synod referred the matter to the Assembly. The Assembly now took it up, and resolved to appeal the decision of the Court of Session to the House of Lords. This was what all parties wanted, and what Dr. Cook had already proposed. But it also resolved to summon Mr. Young to the bar, to answer for his conduct in taking the protest he had done before the presbytery. The Non-intrusionists had an absolute majority in the Assembly, and opposition to them was useless. Mr. Young appeared, accompanied, however, by his counsel, Mr. Hope. It was necessary for him to take this precaution, because a man in his position could hardly have been safe, without legal advice, in the hands of the Assembly in its present mood. Mr. Hope well knew that the meaning of the last sentence in Mr. Buchanan's Declaration of Independence was to justify the Assembly, as a first step, in depriving Mr. Young of his license. He therefore prevented Mr. Young from giving any answer to the questions which were put to him; and it was only at the suggestion of Dr. Cook, that out of respect to the house, he stated that he had served the notarial protest upon the presbytery. The motion to press the question was, however, only carried by a small majority. The Assembly evidently shrank from the inquisitorial process when they came to apply it, and no further action was taken at that time against Mr. Young.

A good deal of the business which should have come before this Assembly had to be remitted to the commission. Amongst other items, the case of Lethendy was so held over. It still, of course, presented the same complications—the two presentations issued by the Crown; the resolution of the presbytery to proceed upon the second; and the interdict of the Court of Session against their doing so. After what had transpired in the General Assembly, however, the course of the commission

[1] Minutes of Auchterarder Presbytery, quoted by Principal Cunningham, Hist. ii. 476.

seemed quite clear. It held that the admission to the benefice was an ecclesiastical act, and as the presbytery had been interdicted from inducting Mr. Kessen, on the presentation, it enjoined them to do so, on the call. This decision seemed to Mr. Clark, as it would to most people, a not over-scrupulous evasion of the letter of the writ of the Court of Session. Mr. Clark accordingly proceeded to procure another, in such terms as met the case in all its aspects, and absolutely prohibited the induction of Mr. Kessen. The presbytery in this difficulty again applied to the commission for advice. Again the commission had no hesitation. They had entered upon a course from which they could not draw back. On the motion of Mr. Dunlop, advocate, the presbytery were ordered to induct Mr. Kessen in defiance of the interdict. The Moderate party were not present in any numbers at the commission. There were therefore only six votes against this course of action, while fifty-two were in favour of it. The commission also enjoined the presbytery to confer with Mr. Clark, and if he did not show penitence for his conduct, and at once withdraw the legal proceedings he had instituted, to prepare a libel charging him with violation of his vows.[1] It was a grave crisis. But now with the authority of the commission of Assembly to sustain them, the presbytery did not hesitate. They met at Lethendy on the 21st of August, 1838, and, well knowing that their action must necessarily entail upon them the most serious consequences, they inducted Mr. Kessen as minister of the parish.

Circumstances of a passing nature not unfrequently strengthen such a strife as was now raging. It so happened that this year was the bi-centenary of the famous Assembly in Glasgow in 1638, that witnessed the bold defiance which the Church of that day thought it right to offer to constituted authority. Every one must respect the uncompromising sense of duty which actuated those old churchmen, and must be thankful that their firmness was the means of procuring that civil liberty which the Government of their day were disposed to disregard. But impartial students of the period will not deny that, looking back upon these doings when the excitement has long passed away, many of them must be regarded as not in strict accordance

[1] Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church of Scotland," i. 76.

with the law. In 1838, however, such a view was apt to be overlooked. The commemoration of the bi-centenary was not unfitted to perpetuate the existing warfare. There was a great meeting in the High Church of Glasgow. A sermon was preached by the moderator of the Assembly, Dr. Muir of Edinburgh. The doings of the old days were rehearsed, and the bravery of the actors was extolled in no measured terms. And not a few believed, as they listened to the panegyrics so lavishly pronounced, that they had fallen on times of a similar type, and that it behoved them to emulate the enthusiasm of the days of old.

In pursuance of the resolution of the Assembly, the appeal taken in the Auchterarder case was prosecuted in the House of Lords. It was heard on the 18th March, 1839. The decision was given on the 3rd of May. It simply dismissed the appeal, and affirmed the judgment of the Court of Session.[1] In delivering this judgment the Lords of Appeal—Brougham and Cottenham—supported it by opinions given at considerable length. They went to show that the Veto Act was illegal. The presbytery must take trial of a presentee's qualifications. "Qualifications" was a technical term. It referred to life, literature, and doctrine, and to these alone.

It might have been supposed that when so distinct a decision had been given by the court, to which the Assembly had appealed upon the motion of the Non-intrusion party themselves, and whose jurisdiction they had therefore explicitly admitted, the Church would have been unanimous in admitting the validity of that decision. In less than a fortnight after it had been announced the Assembly met,[2] but its temper was very different from what might have been looked for. Was not the duty of the Church now clear?—to admit that it had made a mistake, and to proceed to carry out its policy in a constitutional manner, either by obtaining an Act of Parliament legalizing the Veto, or by some other method which might be within its power.

It was rumoured that some of the prominent members of the Non-intrusion party, including Dr. Chalmers himself, were of this opinion. Again the Assembly met in the Tron Church.

[1] Robertson's Report of the Auchterarder case, Supplement. [2] On the 16th May.

When the day came on which the Auchterarder case was to be taken up, it was crowded from floor to ceiling, for the interest in the church question was now becoming intense. Dr. Cook, the leader of the Moderate party, whose views, expressed five years before, had been so remarkably verified, moved that seeing the Veto had been found to be illegal, presbyteries should be instructed to proceed in the settlement of ministers as they had been accustomed to do before it had been enacted, keeping in view the undoubted right of parishioners to object, and of the church courts to adjudicate upon their objections.[1] He spoke calmly and earnestly, not with the air of a man who had gained a signal victory.

Dr. Chalmers, in an eloquent speech, the greater portion of which was read from his manuscript, a process which in no way detracted from its marvellous effect upon the house, moved "That the Presbytery of Auchterarder be instructed to offer no further resistance to the claims of Mr. Young, or of the patron, to the emoluments of the benefice of Auchterarder, and to refrain from claiming the *jus devolutum*, or any other right or privilege connected with the said benefice; and that the Assembly further resolve, that the principle of non-intrusion cannot be abandoned, and that no presentee shall be forced upon any parish contrary to the will of the congregation; and that a committee be appointed to consider in what way the privileges of the national establishment, and the harmony between Church and State may remain unimpaired; with instructions to the said committee to confer with the government of the country if they see fit."[2] A third motion was made by Dr. Muir of St. Stephen's, Edinburgh, the moderator of the previous Assembly, which was intended to unite the two parties. It was to the effect "that while the Assembly was ready to give and to inculcate obedience to the civil courts in all matters relating to civil rights, it was also resolved steadily to prosecute its purpose of securing the appointment of ministers, not only sound in doctrine and morals, but also suitable to the parishes to which they are nominated; that the question of suitableness was one for the investigation and judgment of presbyteries alone; and that a committee be appointed to

[1] Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church of Scotland," vol. i. sec. 2, p. 88. [2] Ibid.

consider and report how the enforcement of civil rights, the spiritual interests of the Christian people, the judicial character and privileges of the ecclesiastical courts, and the professional character and usefulness of probationers, may be effectually maintained, and the union between Church and State maintained entire."[1] The debate was long, and occasionally stormy. Dr. Bryce pointed out that the Assembly by its appeal to the House of Lords had virtually bound itself to obtemper any decision which that tribunal might pronounce, and becoming somewhat warm in his argument, he declared that any other course was unworthy of clergymen. He was instantly met by an outburst of disorder, and a proposal was made that he should be censured at the bar for his language.[2] It was in the course of this discussion that Mr. Candlish of St. George's, Edinburgh, made his first appearance as a debater in the Assembly, and at once took a foremost place in the ranks of the Non-intrusionists. When the vote was taken, it was found that both Dr. Cook's motion and Dr. Muir's were lost, Dr. Chalmers' being carried against Dr. Cook's by a majority of forty-nine, the numbers being 204 for Dr. Chalmers' motion, and 155 for Dr. Cook's.

The names of the committee whom Dr. Chalmers proposed to appoint, in terms of his motion, were read out next day. They were taken from among the more prominent members of the house, without distinction of party. When Dr. Cook's name was read he rose and intimated that he declined to act upon it. Immediately afterwards a young gentleman, sitting beside Dr. Cook, Lord Dalhousie, the future renowned Governor-general of India, rose and requested that his name should also be removed from the list of the committee, and from the roll of the membership of the house. He declined, he said, to be one of a tribunal which had placed itself in the position of defying the law of the land. By the vote of the preceding day, his lordship declared, the Church had lost the allegiance of many of her most earnest and fastest friends, and in fact had rung her own death-knell.[3] Having said this, he took up his hat and left the Assembly.

Such was the reception given by the supreme court of the Church to that decision of the supreme civil tribunal of the

[1] Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church of Scotland," vol. i. sec. 2, p. 89.
[2] Ibid. p. 90. [3] Buchanan's "Ten Years' Conflict," ii. 57.

country, which it had deliberately sought. It was a distinct statement on the part of the Church that she would not acknowledge the law of the land. It was an intimation that although the Veto was found by the only competent authority to be a violation of her contract with the State, she was resolved to persist in its exercise. The Assembly told the presbytery to offer no opposition to Mr. Young in drawing the stipend of Auchterarder. It did so without trying whether Mr. Young was a suitable person to draw the stipend or not. Mr. Young could as little enter upon the enjoyment of the social and pecuniary advantages of the benefice, as he could proceed to discharge its spiritual functions, until he had been found qualified by the presbytery, and inducted to the charge. If the Assembly could have done so, it would have been a gross abuse of its power to tell the presentee to take the stipend, when it did not know whether he was worthy of it or not. It was a mockery to tell him to take it, when it knew that he could not take it until pronounced qualified. But it was still more ominous that the Assembly resolved to continue the process, which had been declared illegal, in all future settlements. It was a determination to continue to act in defiance of the constituted courts of the realm. No wonder, then, that the upholders of law and order stood appalled, and that the friends of religion and morality mourned over the strange defection of the Church—all the more sad, since she solemnly believed in her blinded recklessness that she was doing God service. [1]

[1] It will be borne in mind that the mere outline of the narrative is given in the text. The merits of the whole controversy, and of its various details, are so fully gone into in the dissertation on the Church in its Relation to the Law, that it is unnecessary to describe them more minutely than has been done.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FROM THE CLOSE OF THE FIRST AUCHTERARDER CASE (1839) TO THE SECESSION OF 1843.

The Presbytery of Dunkeld before the High Court—The Marnoch case—Strathbogie presbytery—Action of the Non-intrusionists—Negotiation—Lord Aberdeen's Bill—Assembly of 1840—Strathbogie ministers—Induction at Marnoch—Unseemly riot—Renewed attempts at negotiation—Duke of Argyll's Bill legalizing the Veto—Assembly of 1841—Strathbogie ministers deposed—Protest of the Moderate party—Memorial to the Queen—Moderate party visit Strathbogie—Public meeting of Non-intrusionists—The Culsalmond case—Power of commission discussed by Court of Session—Dissension in the Non-intrusion party—The "Forty"—Assembly of 1842—Act of 1799 repealed—Debate on abolition of patronage—"Claim of Right"—Arbitrary measures of Assembly—Claim of Right transmitted to the Queen—Second Auchterarder case—The Convocation—Manifesto—Deputations to agitate the country—The Stewarton case—Reply to the Claim of Right—Resolution to petition Parliament—Resolutions in House of Lords—Preparations of Non-intrusion party to secede—Their attempt to make a "Disruption" fails—Meeting of Assembly—The Secession.

THE Church had now to face the consequences of its collision with the civil courts. The Presbytery of Dunkeld had obeyed the injunction of the Commission of Assembly, and had inducted Mr. Kessen to the parish of Lethendy; but it had done so in the face of the interdict of the Court of Session. Mr. Clark complained that the interdict had been violated, and that his opponent had been settled in the parish. The court had no alternative. By the law of the land the presbytery had been guilty of a criminal act. They must answer for what they had done. Accordingly, on the 14th of June, 1839, they appeared at the bar of the High Court. They were accompanied by several well-known and influential ministers, who desired in this way to show their sympathy for the presbytery. On being asked if they had any statement to make, they read a paper in which they said that they had acted in obedience to the orders of their superior judicatories, which they held that, by their ordination vow, they were bound to obey.

The court took four days to consider its sentence. Many thought that the ministers would be put in prison. When the court met again, however, the president intimated that, for the present, they had determined that the ends of justice would be sufficiently met by censure, which was accordingly pronounced.

They added, however, that any repetition of such an offence would be visited in a very different manner.[1] Every one was gratified at the conclusion of the case. The members of presbytery could not have been men of much penetration or decision of character, but they were doubtless conscientious in what they had done. It need hardly be said that the scene in the High Court was a most useful handle for the Non-intrusionists. It was simply the result of their own proceedings. They had been warned from the very first that the course on which they had entered was illegal; they had determined to brave all consequences in their assertion of what they thought fit to designate spiritual independence. The result was not only what every unprejudiced person must have foreseen, but what might very easily have been avoided, without in any way compromising the legitimate aims of the party. But to the popular mind it seemed as if the days of persecution were back again. The people did not understand the principles which were involved. They saw only the ministers of Christ arraigned at the bar of a secular court, and subjected to penalties for what they believed to be nothing else than an assertion of Gospel liberty.

But now the eyes of the country were turned towards another case, which had also arisen from the exercise of the Veto law, and which produced results still more serious than any that had as yet transpired. Two years before the time at which we have now arrived, the parish of Marnoch, in the Presbytery of Strathbogie, had become vacant; and the trustees of the patron, the Earl of Fife, had presented the gentleman who had acted as assistant in the parish for a time. Mr. Edwards was an accomplished and able man, possessed of much Christian discernment, as the event proves, but apparently he was not popular as a preacher. Only the village innkeeper and three non-resident heritors signed his call, while out of 300 male communicants 261 came forward to exercise the prerogative of the Veto. The presbytery had great doubts as to the legality of the Veto, but they were anxious if possible to obey the superior courts, which they rightly recognized to be their duty in ordinary circumstances. They therefore referred the matter to the synod for advice, and from the synod it went up to the

[1] "Letter to the Lord Chancellor," by John Hope, p. 63.

Assembly. This was in 1838. The Assembly, as may be supposed, directed the presbytery to reject the presentee, which they accordingly did.

The patrons, under the impression that the case was at an end so far as Mr. Edwards was concerned, now issued a second presentation in favour of a Mr. Henry, also a licentiate of the Church. This produced the same complication as in the case of Lethendy. Mr. Edwards applied to the Court of Session to interdict the presbytery from taking Mr. Henry upon trials; at the same time he raised an action to have it declared that the presbytery were bound to take trial of his own qualifications. The interdict was granted upon the 30th of June. A fortnight afterwards the presbytery met to consider what course they should take. They were in an unpleasant predicament. They had been ordered to reject Mr. Edwards, and they had done so. But they were aware that the Court of Session had declared the Veto to be illegal. They knew that the decision of the Court of Session had been appealed to the House of Lords. In all likelihood the decision of the Court of Session would be confirmed. And now here was an interdict regularly served upon them, prohibiting them from taking the steps which might deprive Mr. Edwards of his legal rights, in consequence of the operation of an illegal Act of Assembly. The members of the Presbytery of Strathbogie were men of a different mental calibre from those of the Presbytery of Dunkeld. They saw the invalidity of the Veto Act; and they knew that they were not bound by any vow, that they had ever made, to obey an illegal order, even of the General Assembly. They were shrewd hard-headed Aberdonians. But they were also men of much earnestness—some of them men of saintly piety They reverenced the law of the land as the sacred ordinance of the great Head of the Church. Accordingly, when they met, they resolved, by a majority, "that the Court of Session, having authority in matters relating to the induction of ministers, and having interdicted all proceedings on the part of the presbytery; and it being the duty of the presbytery to submit to their authority regularly interposed, the presbytery do delay all procedure until the matter in dispute be finally determined."

Nothing certainly could be more reasonable than such a de-

cision. The law which must ultimately regulate such cases was not yet finally settled. The appeal to the House of Lords in the Auchterarder case had still to be disposed of. It was only common sense that the church courts should pause in similar cases, until it was seen what this decision was to be. A minority of the presbytery, however, who sympathized with the Non-intrusionists, took a different view, and appealed to the synod. The synod sympathized with the views of the Non-intrusionists, but without pronouncing any judgment referred the case to the Assembly. At the Assembly, the members from the Presbytery of Strathbogie urged that the case might be disposed of before it closed; but the Non-intrusion party preferred that such matters should be decided in the commission in the first instance, and the Marnoch case was remitted to that body. The commission censured the presbytery for asserting that the Court of Session had authority in matters connected with the induction of ministers, and while expressing sympathy with the parish in being deprived for so long of the services of a stated pastor, they contented themselves with prohibiting the presbytery from taking steps for the induction of Mr. Edwards before next General Assembly.[1]

But hardly had this judgment of the commission been arrived at, when a decision of the Court of Session was pronounced, finding that the presbytery were bound to take Mr. Edwards on trials, and to admit him to the benefice if they found him qualified. The appeal to the House of Lords in the Auchterarder case had confirmed the decision of the Court of Session in pronouncing the Veto illegal. When another case of the same kind came before that court it had no alternative. And now the presbytery had to decide what they should do. The Assembly had indeed resolved by a majority to defy the decision of the House of Lords, and continue to act in the settlement of ministers upon the provisions of the illegal Veto Act. But the presbytery felt that their duty as Christian ministers, and the allegiance which they owed to their Master constrained them to decline subjection to an authority which was persisting in issuing unlawful mandates, under the pretext that their ecclesiastical position rendered these mandates binding. This was in

[1] Dr. Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church of Scotland" (case of Marnoch).

effect the course which the presbytery resolved to follow, whatever suffering or obloquy they might incur. But they were anxious to bear themselves in such a manner that they should not have the aspect of wanton opposition to the supreme courts of the Church, even while they knew them to be acting illegally. They met on the 4th of December, sustained Mr. Edwards' call, and appointed his trials. There they paused, and resolved to report the whole matter to the commission—scarcely, we can suppose, for advice, for they must have been tolerably well assured what reception their report would receive—but in order that the commission might be fully informed of their position, and the steps they proposed to take.

The commission of Assembly held a special meeting on the 11th of December. Contrary to the ordinary custom, it was attended largely, for the questions to come before it were now seen to involve the very existence of the Church. But the Moderate party as a body were not there, for they had doubts as to whether it was competent for the commission to adjudicate upon such questions. There were only a few of them therefore present. The presbytery appeared at the bar by their counsel. They were asked if they adhered to their resolution. Their counsel replied that they retained their position, and held to their resolution. Dr. Candlish, who was now fairly established as a leader of the Non-intrusion party—although, it must be remembered, too young a man to have the experience which is indispensable to profitable leadership in such a controversy—was put forward to move the proposal of the dominant party. He did so in a series of resolutions, in which the sins of the Presbytery of Strathbogie were detailed, and their proceedings annulled; and they were suspended from exercising their functions as ministers of the gospel. Dr. Bryce, a manful and consistent Moderate, moved that the conduct of the presbytery should be approved, which was received with shouts of derisive laughter by the Non-intrusion party.[1] Dr. Muir moved what was intended as a middle motion—too vague to be useful. Both the amendments were lost, and Dr. Candlish's motion became the finding of the commission; against which every legal protest was taken by the counsel for the presbytery.

[1] Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church of Scotland" (Marnoch case).

The result of this sentence was that the minority of four, out of eleven members of the Presbytery of Strathbogie, were regarded by the commission of Assembly as the lawful presbytery for the time being. The spiritual interests of the whole district of Strathbogie were therefore committed to their keeping. They were instructed to meet as a presbytery, and to take the necessary measures for intimating the sentence of suspension, which had been passed upon the seven ministers who formed the majority, to their congregations and parishioners, and also for supplying ordinances in these parishes, and especially the regular preaching of the Word. An influential committee of the General Assembly was appointed to assist the four brethren of the presbytery in this work. But the majority of the presbytery very naturally objected to this procedure. They held that their suspension had been illegal, and that the order of the commission to the four ministers of the minority was equally illegal. A crisis had arrived, which they felt it to be their duty to their people, and to the Church at large, to meet vigorously. Four days after the sentence had been passed, therefore, they met as a presbytery, and applied to the Court of Session to interdict the minority from intimating the sentence of the commission. The interdict was granted, prohibiting any one from using the church, the churchyard, or schoolhouse for this purpose.[1] The suspended ministers continued to preach as usual, and the people rallied round them, for they were indignant at the usage to which the ministers were subjected, who had served them so faithfully, and whom they loved so well.[2]

But the committee, appointed to assist the minority of the presbytery, lost no time in fulfilling the office which had been imposed upon them. They at once proceeded to the scene of the conflict. They obeyed the interdict to the extent of keeping away from church, churchyard, and schoolhouse. But they took their stand at some prominent position, generally the market-place, or the gate of the church, or in any barn or public hall available, and there they announced the sentence of the commission against the parish ministers. The Non-intrusion party took care to send down their most popular preachers on these errands, and they often attracted large

[1] Cunningham's Hist. ii. 489. [2] Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church" (Marnoch).

crowds. The proceedings became exciting. It was not wonderful that many of the more ignorant people began to fancy that the old times of the covenants and of the conventicles had returned.

The moral effect of all this was the worst that could possibly be conceived. Ministers of widespread reputation and of popular gifts were pervading the quiet district of Strathbogie, professing to preach the Gospel, and no doubt doing so faithfully at some parts of their ministrations; but using the opportunity to hold up the parish ministers, and the party in the Church who did not agree with their own views, to opprobrium. The Strathbogie ministers felt that they had a still further duty to perform. Their people must be saved if possible from these pernicious irregularities. They again applied to the Court of Session to interdict any one from intruding into their parishes, for the purpose of doing duty, without their consent. The court acceded to this request, and granted an interdict, which was known as the "Extended Interdict." The Non-intrusion party at once fastened upon this proceeding as an instance of the tyranny of the Court of Session, and its determination to control the spiritual functions of the Church. It was an attempt, they said, to prevent them from preaching the Gospel. Not unfrequently they applied to their own case, certainly in bad taste, if not with an approach to profanity, the noble words of St. Peter, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." Even the less decided of the Moderate party, and some of those who were becoming known as a middle party in these matters, had doubts as to the propriety of the Court of Session's action in the extended interdict.

But it was the logical outcome of the circumstances. It was founded upon the fact that the whole of the Church's procedure in the cases arising out of theVeto was illegal. The Strathbogie ministers were being protected in the exercise of spiritual functions which it had been found, by the supreme tribunal of the country, whose decision the Church herself had solemnly invited, they were entitled, nay bound to exercise. If their suspension had been legally carried out, the civil court could not have interfered, and would never have tried to do so. But their suspension

was illegal. In point of fact they were not suspended at all. They held the position and status of parish ministers as truly as they had before the sentence of suspension was pronounced. The spiritual superintendence of their parishes had been committed to them by the Church, at their settlement. They were responsible for it. The law of the Church forbade their being interfered with in their parochial management. The Court of Session did nothing more than protect them in the proper discharge of their duty, which it was admitted on all hands would be ruinously undermined, were the unauthorized intrusion of other ministers of the Church to be permitted. The Non-intrusion party, of course, disregarded the interdict. They would have been pleased to have been imprisoned. But the Strathbogie ministers contented themselves with the possession of their power. They did not try to press it. Criminal proceedings against the Non-intrusionists were happily not taken.

During these unseemly occurrences it was thought that negotiation might be attempted. It is true that the action of the Non-intrusion party had not placed them in the most favourable position for such an attempt; but the men in authority were now seriously anxious as to the result of this prolonged conflict. Dr. Chalmers and an influential deputation had waited on the Government in July, 1839. The Whigs were in power. Dr. Chalmers was a Tory, and Lord Melbourne seems to have had no great liking for the blunt Scottish divine. Dr. Gordon was therefore put forward as their speaker. The prospect was not encouraging. Statesmen had difficulty in saying what could be done, but they were willing to make an honest effort. The lord advocate was to consult with the procurator for the Church to try and devise some healing measure.

In the spring of 1840 Dr. Robert Buchanan and Mr. Dunlop went up to London, on the same errand. It was thought that Mr. Dunlop's Whiggism would probably tend to propitiate the Whig statesmen. But negotiation was now difficult; and foiled in their efforts with the Whigs, the Non-intrusion committee next endeavoured to enlist the Tories in their cause. The Earl of Aberdeen had for some time been in communication with them, with a view to an adjustment of the differences. His lordship was particularly anxious to effect an amicable arrange-

ment, in a way honourable to the Church. He deprecated in the strongest terms, in some of his letters, the idea of any humiliation being imposed upon the ministers of religion, even if they should have erred in judgment.[1]

On the 5th of May Lord Aberdeen brought a Bill into the House of Lords, declaring it to be the law of Scotland that the members of any congregation might state, before the presbytery, any objections they pleased against the settlement of a presentee, and that the presbytery had jurisdiction to pronounce judgment regarding them, and to reject the presentee if they should see cause.[2]

When the Assembly met in May the Bill of Lord Aberdeen came up for discussion. But the Church had, before this time, declared that Non-intrusion, or the Veto, was a principle from which she could not depart, and that she must have the power to give effect to the mere dissent of a majority of communicants. So the Bill, which did not secure this, was rejected by the Assembly. It was read a second time in the House of Lords and then withdrawn. Lord Aberdeen knew it was useless to carry it through, unless it was likely to be accepted by the dominant majority in the Church. The rejection of the Bill by the Assembly, and Dr. Chalmers' part in its rejection, was, it is said, warmly resented by the noble earl.[3]

When the discussion on the Bill was concluded, the case of the Strathbogie ministers came before the Assembly. They had been suspended by the commission, but they had gone on to exercise all their spiritual functions, and they had interdicted the emissaries of the supreme court or its commission from intruding into their parishes. They now pleaded that the commission had no power to suspend them. The reply was that the Assembly had remitted all that concerned Marnoch to the commission. The conduct of the commission was therefore approved by a large majority. Then it was resolved to confer with the seven rebellious ministers, and to endeavour to bring them to submission. But they stood their ground manfully. They had no intention, they said, to be disrespectful to the church courts, but they had a constitu-

[1] Cunningham's Hist., ii. 494, where Lord Aberdeen's letters are quoted.
[2] Ibid. 495. [3] Ibid. 495, note.

tional duty to perform, and they felt bound in conscience to discharge it. They had only obeyed the law of the land, and in doing so they had not justly incurred the censures of the Church. The Assembly therefore continued the sentence of suspension, although after long and able debate. A large minority, led by Dr. George Cook, dissented from the finding, and protested that they should not be liable for what they regarded as an infringement of civil rights. The Assembly also gave instructions to the August commission to deal further with the ministers, and if they should then still be contumacious, that they be served with a libel and brought before the next Assembly.[1]

The Strathbogie ministers were in some quarters censured at the time, and by some they are censured yet, for not acquiescing in the sentence of suspension. But such censure is unreasonable. The question turns upon whether they were or were not legally suspended. If legally, their whole conduct must be condemned. But their suspension was illegal. It was inflicted for obeying the statute law of the land, which they were bound by their oath of allegiance to obey; and it was inflicted by a court which, it was maintained, had no power to pronounce such a sentence.[2]

Accordingly they did not appear at the bar of the commission in August. They sent in a document declining its jurisdiction. This was, of course, regarded as an aggravation of their first offence. A libel was accordingly served upon them, and another upon Mr. Edwards. At the meeting in November these documents were found relevant, and proof was ordered to be taken at the meeting in March, so that the cases should be ready for the Assembly in May.[3]

Meanwhile another act went forward in this strange drama. The presbytery had some months before found Mr. Edwards qualified. But they had done no more. Now, he raised an action against them in the Court of Session, to find that they must either admit him or be liable to him in damages of £10,000. The court said nothing about the damages; but they found that

[1] Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church of Scotland," vol. i., sec. 2, pp. 203–217.

[2] See Dr. Cook's speech, quoted in Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church of Scotland," 203–205.

[3] Cunningham's Hist., ii. 498.

the presbytery were bound to admit Mr. Edwards to the benefice, having made trial of his qualifications and declared themselves satisfied upon that point. The presbytery were now, therefore, in a most painful position. On the one hand, they were justly and righteously liable in damages, if they failed to induct the presentee; on the other hand, they were certain to be deposed if they did induct him. It is true the deposition would be illegal and incompetent; but no man who respects church authority could fail to shrink from such a sentence however irregular. The presbytery made up their minds. Calmly and resolutely, in the face of all obloquy, they resolved to do their duty and induct the presentee.

The scene has often been described. It was on the 21st of January, 1841. The ground was covered with snow, and the river, which winds round the knoll on which the parish church stands, was partially frozen. Five only of the presbytery were present, for two of the seven Moderate ministers were prevented from attending, and the four Non-intrusionists did not, of course, recognize the right of their seven brethren to transact any sacred function. Mr. Inglis, now Lord President of the Court of Session, was there as counsel for the presentee. A great crowd of parishioners filled the Church. Their agent protested against the settlement, and intimated that he would have given in objections to the life and doctrine of Mr. Edwards, but for the fact that he did not recognize the ministers present as the Presbytery of Strathbogie. Then the parishioners left the Church, and a scene of painful disorder ensued. The ordination and induction, however, took place, and the presentee was settled in due form.

Nothing certainly could be more unseemly than such disorder on so solemn an occasion; and nothing could be more detrimental to the influence of religion. People, who are not disposed to look beneath the surface, are very apt to fasten upon the persons who were the occasion of such a scene, and to charge them with the entire responsibility, instead of realizing that the responsibility must really rest, not with those who were the *occasion*, but with those who were the *cause* of the painful proceedings. "Five suspended ministers"—writes even so able and judicious a historian as Principal Cun-

ningham[1]—"in defiance of the injunctions of their ecclesiastical superiors, and in face of the protestations of the whole people, ordaining a suspended licentiate, and the parishioners to a man deserting the Church, and riot and uproar ensuing!" But the whole question turns upon the validity of the suspension. If the ministers and the licentiate had really been suspended, there would have been no difficulty in at once overturning the entire proceedings. The universal voice of the country would have been raised, along with that of the ecclesiastical courts, in denouncing the so-called ordination as an infamous sacrilege. The civil courts would at once have interfered to prevent the profane pretender to the benefice from occupying it, or reaping any of its fruits. But the truth is that an illegal suspension is not a suspension at all. Both the ministers who carried out the act of ordination, and the licentiate whom they set apart, were in full possession of their ecclesiastical status. The civil courts had said so all along. The overborne minority of the ecclesiastical courts protested that this was the case. The ecclesiastical courts themselves formally said so, as soon as they were relieved of the element which had mingled illegally in their counsels, and had vitiated their action, and prevented their voice from being heard—the chapel ministers. The disorder, and the desertion of the people, were no doubt deeply to be deplored. But those who had grasped the principles involved in the conflict saw that these were but temporary evils, and that behind all these lay questions of law and order; of the sacredness of contract as between the Church and the State; of the vested rights of the people and of the clergy; of immunity from the tyranny of the spurious claims of priestcraft—which the defenders of the constitution of the Church of Scotland dare not abandon, if they desired to maintain a "conscience void of offence."

It is pleasing to know that long before Mr. Edwards' brief ministry came to a close—he died in 1848—he had endeared himself to the very people who had so thoroughly been misled when he came amongst them. His death was mourned over by churchmen and dissenters alike; and he was followed to the grave by the regrets of many who, when called to receive

[1] History, ii. 499.

him as their pastor, had risen from their places and left the Church of Scotland.[1] The present generation have no inclination to follow their progenitors in their divisive courses; and a large and vigorous congregation now worships in the parish church of Marnoch.[2]

When the commission of the Assembly met in March, proof was led, as had been agreed upon, of the charges against Mr. Edwards. The seven suspended ministers gave a written acknowledgment of the truth of the facts stated against them, and after a good deal of violent speechifying the cases were referred to the next Assembly.

Attempts were still made by friends in high quarters to secure an adjustment of the disorders of the Church. But they were daily becoming more difficult. The Church claimed the right of saying what was ecclesiastical and what was not. In restricting their province to spiritual affairs with this proviso, the Non-intrusionists practically laid claim to unlimited power. The leaders of both political parties, therefore, were united in condemning not only their resistance to law, but their punishment of those who resolved to obey it. Sir Robert Peel had said as much in his place in Parliament. Lord Aberdeen was provoked at the reception his Bill had met with at the hands of the Assembly, and stood aloof. The Duke of Argyll now attempted the task of endeavouring to save the Church. On the 6th of May, 1841, he introduced in the House of Lords "an Act to regulate the exercise of patronage in Scotland." It was almost a legalizing of the Veto. The presbytery might reject a presentee upon the mere dissent of the parishioners, unless it were proved that their opposition proceeded from causeless prejudice or from faction. It gave the power of objecting, to all male communicants above twenty-one years of age; the Veto Act restricted it to male heads of families. The Bill was read for the first time, and then it was deferred till the General Assembly should pronounce upon it.

When the Assembly met, the first important business it took up was the question of patronage. Before the Veto Act had been passed, there were comparatively few in the Church who

[1] Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church of Scotland," p. 102.

[2] See "Book of the Church of Scotland, 1889." Presbytery of Strathbogie, Marnoch.

went so far as to seek for its abolition. The disputes that had arisen, however, led many to feel that the simplest way of getting rid of them would be to clear away the cause which had led to them all. Mr. Cunningham led the movement in the Assembly. He averred that patronage was a great grievance. But he went further. Apparently forgetting that he had himself accepted two presentations during the course of his ministry, he propounded the proposition that patronage was anti-scriptural. Dr. Chalmers was not hearty in his support. Dr. Cook moved that the overtures on the subject be dismissed, and he carried his motion by the narrow majority of three.[1] Next day the Duke of Argyll's Bill was taken up. Dr. Candlish moved a series of resolutions, in a more conciliatory tone than was usual with him, approving of the Bill as containing the principle of Non-intrusion. He was opposed by Dr. Hill, professor of divinity in the University of Glasgow. He objected to the principle of a mere dissent, without reasons, being regarded as sufficient. He asserted also that so long as the Church maintained its attitude of opposition to statute law, instead of rescinding the illegal Veto Act, she need not expect that the legislature would come to her aid.[2] Mr. Candlish's motion was carried by a large majority, 230 against 105.

The trial of the Strathbogie ministers now came on. The libel charged them with having denied the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ being the only Head of the Church, by having applied to the civil court for interdicts against the ecclesiastical courts, and having violated their vows of obedience to their ecclesiastical superiors. By the making of this application, the libel went on, "you did deny the truth of God's holy Word, and did disown the Lord Jesus, in so far as regards His authority as only King and Head of His Church; and contrary to the Word of God and Confession of Faith foresaid, and to your solemn vows and engagements before-mentioned, did acknowledge the powers committed by Him to church officers alone to be vested in a secular court having no rule or government in His house, and did acknowledge the said secular court to be supreme in matters spiritual over the judicatories of this Church, and to obstruct, stay, and subvert the same." Such was actually the accus-

[1] Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church of Scotland," ii. 109–115. [2] Ibid. 117–120.

ation, preferred against the ministers of the Presbytery of Strathbogie, by their brethren of the majority in the General Assembly. The debate which ensued, led on the opposing sides by Dr. Chalmers and Dr. Cook, was a brilliant display of argumentative power. The Non-intrusion party alleged, as usual, that the obedience of the Strathbogie ministers to the civil courts proved them false in their allegiance to the church courts, and to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Church's great Head. Mr. Cunningham asserted in explicit terms, and endeavoured to prove, that the ministers had been guilty of a breach of the laws of the Church, a violation of their ordination vows, and a sin against the Lord Jesus Christ. In a clear and masterly speech Dr. Cook maintained that they had done only what they were bound to do; that their suspension had been illegal; that while they had disobeyed the church courts, it was not till the Veto had been declared an unlawful Act; and that had they yielded obedience to the Church they would have committed a crime. Mr. Robertson of Ellon, who had for some time taken a leading part in church affairs, replied to Mr. Cunningham, following him step by step through his argument, and meeting it with overwhelming power. Dr. Chalmers is said to have declared that the debate between these two divines was "the greatest display of intellectual gladiatorship he had ever seen."[1] Mr. Bisset of Bourtie gave a startling reality to the discussion by declaring that he had disregarded the sentence of suspension pronounced against the brethren, by preaching for them and assisting them at the dispensation of the communion, and that should sentence of deposition be the result of this libel, he should, if God spared him, do so again.

Before the debate closed, the ministers who were at the bar gave in a statement, in which they declared that they had been actuated solely by a sense of duty; that the libel against them was incompetent; and that, while they would yield obedience to the church courts in all things lawful, they could not and would not violate the right of others and the law of the land at the bidding of the majority of the Assembly, who had arbitrarily demanded it. They then left the house. Dr. Chalmers moved their deposition. It was agreed to without a vote, for

[1] Charteris' "Life of Dr. Robertson." 136.

the Moderate party knew that a vote would only be a waste of time. But Dr. Cook gave in reasons of dissent, in which he protested that he should hold the ministers of Strathbogie to be in full status as ministers of the Church and incumbents of their several parishes, notwithstanding any sentence of deposition which might be pronounced against them.[1]

The moderator, as is customary upon such solemn occasions, called upon a member, Dr. Thomas Brown, of St. John's, Glasgow, to engage in prayer. But before he did so several ministers and elders rose and left the house, not wishing to take part in an act of devotion which they could not but regard as anything short of profanity. The sentence of deposition was then pronounced in customary form, and the Assembly broke up. The light of a summer morning had dawned, as it often does, ere the proceedings of the General Assembly closed. The majority had carried their point. But they must have felt that they had fulfilled the prophecy of one of their own number, Dr. M'Farlan of Greenock, that what they were about to do would probably break up the Church of Scotland.[2] The next day Mr. Edwards was declared to be no longer a licentiate of the Church. Dr. Cook's protest was rejected, and his request that it should be recorded was refused. This was the crowning act of irregularity perpetrated by this Assembly.

There was another case of deposition by the same Assembly which created much excitement. It was that of Mr. Wright, the minister of Borthwick. He was the author of several devotional books, some of them extremely popular, which pious families had been in the habit of using at their family worship for years. One of them had been before the public for about twenty years prior to this time, and it had never been suspected of being heretical. But Mr. Wright was an adherent of the Moderate party, and that was now enough to bring him under the ban of the dominant majority. The case had been originated

[1] Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church of Scotland," ii. 164.

[2] Dr. Bryce gives a most interesting *résumé* of this important debate in his "Ten Years of the Church of Scotland," vol. ii. I was told by Dr. John Cook, of Haddington, the son of the famous leader of the Moderate party, that on the evening before the case from Strathbogie came on, his father sought an interview with some of the leaders of the Non-intrusion party, and besought them not to proceed to the extremity of deposing the Strathbogie ministers. It was a strong step in the leader of a party to take. The fact of Dr. Cook having done so might have opened the eyes of the other side to the gravity of the issue.

in his synod by some of the Non-intrusionist leaders. The Presbytery of Dalkeith was ordered to take it up. The heresy was found proven, although it was of a very mild character at the worst. Mr. Wright expressly declared that he did not hold the heresies attributed to him, and that he was ready to combat them with all his power. But it was found that they were recorded in his books, and the Assembly gave him no place of repentance. He was deposed.

The Strathbogie ministers at once applied to the Court of Session for suspension of the sentence against them, and also for interdict against any one being settled in their parishes. The interdict was served upon the Assembly while it was sitting. The Commissioner was absent. He was sent for. He returned, and when the cause of the message he had received was intimated, he replied that he "hoped he should not be found wanting in the exercise of his duty, whether that duty called upon him to uphold the right of the Assembly, or to support and maintain the authority and prerogatives of the Crown, if they should be attempted to be infringed from any quarter whatever." There was much heated discussion as to whether the interdict should be received. At last it was agreed that it should be brought in and laid upon the table. A series of resolutions were then proposed and carried, to the effect that it was right to lay before the Queen in Council the insult which had been offered to the Assembly, and to her Majesty, in the serving of the interdict upon the house. It does not appear whether they were ever transmitted, or what reception they met with if they were.[1]

The Moderate party very speedily showed that the condition of matters brought about in the Assembly of 1841 could not be quietly submitted to. They had disregarded the so-called sentence of suspension passed upon the Strathbogie ministers, and had held ministerial communion with them, notwithstanding. They took the same course after the sentence of deposition had been pronounced by the Assembly. Arrangements were at once made, by which a regular system of assistance was afforded to the Strathbogie ministers. From all parts of the country sympathizing friends proceeded to the remote

[1] Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church," ii. 167-172.

Aberdeenshire valley, and gladly tendered their sympathy and help. The ministers retained their places, and continued to discharge their duties as formerly amongst their attached people; and although many of the ordinary assistants, who had been in the habit of officiating at the communion seasons, were no longer to be seen, their places were supplied by some of the most celebrated ministers of the Church. Of course this led to action on the part of the dominant majority; and at the August commission the names of those who had held ministerial communion with the deposed ministers were laid before the meeting, and their several presbyteries instructed to deal with them. The minority dissented from this resolution, but they did not content themselves with a dissent. They intimated that they would now take steps to ascertain whether those who gave obedience to the law, or those who persisted in setting it at defiance, were henceforth to be regarded as ministers of the State Church. The Non-intrusionists took alarm at this resolution. They called another meeting of the commission, at which the determination of the majority to abide by their principles was formally expressed. A great public meeting was held in St. Cuthbert's Church, followed by others in Glasgow and elsewhere, in which the same sentiments were reiterated.[1] Appeals to popular sentiment were now seen to be advisable and necessary.

The Culsalmond case occurred this year, which, although differing in some particulars from that of Marnoch, was, essentially, very similar. The majority of heads of families vetoed the presentee, Mr. Middleton. The presbytery, under the guidance of Mr. Bisset of Bourtie, proceeded according to the old law of the Church, and set aside the Veto, as known now by the decision of the House of Lords to be illegal. On the day of the ordination, the church was taken possession of by a riotous mob, and the presbytery had to retire to the manse to complete the settlement. The case came before the commission, when the minister was prohibited from officiating in the parish, and the Non-intrusion minority were empowered to provide ordinances for it, until the case should be finally disposed of at a subsequent meeting of the commission. When

[1] "Ten Years' Conflict," ii. 443.

it came before the Court of Session on an application for interdict, the question of the power of the commission was raised by the bench and debated at great length. The opinion was very decided that the commission had no inherent power, and that its decision in such a case as the present was incompetent; but no decision on this point was pronounced.

Still the friends of the Church on both sides were clinging to the hope that some arrangement might yet be suggested to avert the calamity of a schism, which every one now began to fear might be inevitable. Sir George Sinclair tried to step into the breach by reviving Lord Aberdeen's rejected bill, with a clause added giving larger powers of rejection to presbyteries. The clause suggested by Sir George, upon which the whole of this negotiation turned, was to the effect that a presbytery might reject a presentee against whom objections had been tendered, "in respect that the said reasons and objections, though not in themselves conclusive in the judgment of the presbytery, are entertained by such a proportion of the parishioners, and entertained by them so strongly, as to render it, in the opinion of the presbytery, taking into account the reasons and objections aforesaid, and the degree to which they prevail, inconsistent with their duty, or with the spiritual interests of the parish, to proceed with the settlement of the presentee in that particular parish."[1] This clause came to be known as the *liberum arbitrium*. It gave the Church very ample powers, although it did not sanction non-intrusion in its strictest sense. The right of rejection lay with the presbytery, and not with the people; but if there was a strongly expressed dislike to the presentee, the presbytery had power to reject him, on that ground alone, as disqualified for that particular parish. At first the Non-intrusion committee of the Church intimated its approval of the proposal. The Government indicated that such a measure would be passed. There was great rejoicing in the ranks of the Non-intrusionists. But very shortly afterwards the committee declared that they had mistaken the import of the clause, and they withdrew the approbation they had at first expressed.

But in truth there were practical difficulties, as matters now stood, which rendered any attempt at compromise all but im-

[1] Sir George Sinclair's clause, quoted in Cunningham's Hist. ii. 510.

possible. The Strathbogie ministers had been deposed. How were they to be dealt with? The Moderate party had been in communication with the Government, and had made it aware of the reasons for their support of the Strathbogie men, which had been fully appreciated. There had been an understanding that in any action which Government might take, their position and status as ministers of the Church were to be fully recognized.[1]

This was the difficulty that faced Sir George Sinclair. The Non-intrusionists would never agree to this. The Moderates would agree to nothing else. The Dean of Faculty, who had been counsel for the Strathbogie ministers, but who was now most anxious to get the matter settled, drafted a letter, which Sir George Sinclair sent to them, with the proposal that they should adopt and subscribe it, expressing penitence for having approached the civil courts, and promising obedience for the future if they were reponed. But as might have been anticipated, the Strathbogie ministers positively refused to sign such a document. They would not ask to be reponed, because they held that they had never been deposed.[2] This was an insuperable obstacle, and the negotiations came to an end But they had an important effect upon the Non-intrusion party. Some of them, who had not realized it at first, were now beginning to see that serious personal consequences might be the result of all this turmoil. Unless they obtained a very speedy arrangement, they might be compelled to abandon their position in the Church, and this was by no means a pleasant prospect. Others were sincerely anxious to end the strife, and when the wide powers of the *liberum arbitrium* were proposed, they felt that they could conscientiously adopt it. There were some members even of the central Non-intrusion committee who began to think in this way, and many throughout the Church who had hitherto been uncompromising Non-intrusionists tended in the same direction.

In the synod of Glasgow and Ayr this feeling had taken a strong hold; and at the spring meeting in 1842 a member said in the course of a discussion, "There are forty of us who are ready to accept the *liberum arbitrium*," whereupon they

[1] Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church," ii. 182. [2] Ibid. 202–210.

were humorously nicknamed "the forty thieves;" and the section which thereafter gave their support to the Moderate party were known as "the forty."

The Duke of Argyll's Bill had collapsed when the Whig government went out of power. The Tories were now in office; and it was arranged that Mr. Campbell of Monzie, the member for Argyllshire, should introduce a Bill practically the same into the House of Commons. On the 4th of May it was to be read a second time. It was evident, as had been argued in the General Assembly, that it had no likelihood of passing. The Government, themselves, intimated that they were prepared to move, and they asked that Mr. Campbell's Bill be postponed. They proposed Lord Aberdeen's Bill, with Sir George Sinclair's clause added. The Non-intrusionists had fancied that something much nearer to their own views was to be brought forward. When the nature of the Government's proposal was declared, therefore, Mr. Campbell announced that he was unable to accept it. He divided the house upon the postponement of his own measure, and lost by 43 votes to 131.

The Assembly of 1842 was felt as it approached to be a critical period in the history of the Church. All looked forward to it with anxiety, scarcely any with hope. The Marquis of Bute was delegated by the Crown as lord high Commissioner, and his wealth and high position gave a splendour and circumstance to the office which it had seldom before possessed. Dr. David Welsh, professor of church history in the University of Edinburgh, was chosen moderator.

The deposed ministers of Strathbogie, true to their contention that their deposition was illegal and therefore null and void, had sent up two of their number and a ruling elder to represent them in the Assembly. Their commission had been lodged with the agent, and the names of the commissioners had been printed in the roll. But the majority at once indicated its disapprobation of the agent's conduct in having included these names in the printed list; and the Rev. Mr. Carment of Rosskeen remarked that he could not have insulted the house so much "if he had sent up a commission from seven tinkers or scavengers of Edinburgh!"[1] The minority of the presbytery

[1] Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church," ii. 254.

had also sent up commissioners. They had been interdicted from doing so by the Court of Session, but their nominees were at once admitted. When the decision of the Assembly was intimated, the ruling elder sent up by the deposed ministers, Mr. Edmund, protested against the deliverance, and against the Assembly as a lawful Assembly of the Church of Scotland; declaring that all its Acts and proceedings should be deemed null and void.[1]

This Assembly was to be the last in which many of its members were to take part. Whether they had definite prognostication of this or not, they resolved that it should be devoted to the furtherance of their own party aims. The Act of 1799, by which ministers of other denominations were prohibited from preaching in the pulpits of the Establishment, was repealed, the only caution expressed at the time being that ministers be careful to hold ministerial communion only with those "sound in the faith."[2] Then came a great debate on patronage. Mr. Cunningham moved that it was "a grievance, . . . the main cause of the evils in which the Church is involved, and ought to be abolished."[3] The Non-intrusion party supported the motion. The Moderates opposed it. It was carried by a large majority.

But the principal Act of the Assembly was the adoption of a document entitled, the "Claim, Declaration and Protest," known as the "Claim of Right," in imitation of the Claim of Right made by the nation, at the revolution of 1688. It was brought up as an overture signed by a large number of leading members of the Non-intrusion party. It was well known, however, to be the composition of Mr. Dunlop, an advocate of universally admitted ability, who had taken a leading part in all the movements of the Non-intrusion party. He was the legal adviser of the party, and was often facetiously styled by his friends "the modern Warriston." The object of the Claim was to set before Government a definite statement of the principles of the party, with a detail of their grievances. It was to be a final appeal to Government for redress. Negotiation had failed. This was the last hope. If the Government should turn a deaf ear to the Claim, then it seemed evident that but one course was open to the claimants.

[1] Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church," ii. 256. [2] Ibid. 262. [3] Ibid. 263

It is unnecessary to analyse the document in this place. The reader is referred to the criticism of it, which is to be found towards the close of the dissertation in this work, on "The Church in its Relation to the Law and the State." It is conclusively shown there that in its statements as to the legal decisions upon which it founds, being opposed to the principles which guided the decisions complained of, it is very erroneous. The lord high Commissioner was asked to lay the Claim of Right and the petition against Patronage before the Queen. He agreed to do so, but upon the understanding that he was not to be supposed to approve of their contents.[1]

It has been mentioned that the Moderate party had organized a system by which sympathy should be expressed with the ministers of Strathbogie, who had been illegally deposed, and the necessary assistance afforded them at communion seasons and otherwise. This was, of course, in total disregard of the Assembly's procedure in deposing them; and nothing could have justified such action but the illegality of the deposition. Of course, to be consistent, the Assembly of 1842 had to take some notice of the ministers who had thus disregarded their sentence. Many members of the Moderate party had done so,[2] and some of them were leaders and men of eminence. Eleven of the more prominent were charged with having received the communion from the deposed ministers. Amongst them were Dr. Bryce, Mr. Cook of Haddington, Mr. Grant of Leith, and Mr. Robertson of Ellon. They were suspended from their judicial functions for nine months; that is to say, while they were not prohibited from preaching and discharging the ordinary duties of their parishes, they were prohibited from sitting in presbytery, synod, or General Assembly; and their influence and votes would have been lost to their party if they had acquiesced in the sentence. Mr. Robertson of Ellon did acquiesce in it. He held that, however illegal, it was still the sentence of the supreme court of the Church. He submitted to it on that ground, believing it, as he said, to be his right to disregard it, although his duty to acknowledge it.[3] He was

[1] Cunningham's Hist., ii. 517. [2] About seventy. Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church," ii. 286.
[3] Charteris' "Life of Professor Robertson," p. 160.

not heard henceforth, therefore, in the discussions in the church courts, until after the Secession; and although doubtless he acted conscientiously, it is not surprising that those who were contending for a great principle should have, in some degree, resented his temporary defection. Several presbyteries refused to remove the names of the suspended ministers from their roll of members; and the sympathy with the Strathbogie ministers continued to be expressed as emphatically as ever, and in the same manner.

The question of the legality of the chapel ministers' position came into notice before this Assembly. It is surprising that it had not been founded on in some of the leading cases previously. A minister in the south of Scotland had been libelled, somewhat harshly, for recklessness in contracting debts, for which, it may be said, he had previously compounded with his creditors, and had procured his discharge. After certain procedure, he applied to the Court of Session for interdict, chiefly on the ground that the courts of the Church which tried him were illegally constituted, by the introduction into them of the chapel ministers. He was summoned to the bar of this Assembly, and deposed, not upon the charge which had been made against him, but for having applied to the civil court for protection.[1] In another case where a minister was afflicted with kleptomania, and had suspended the proceedings against him in a similar manner on the same ground, he was likewise deposed for applying to the civil court. Mr. Cunningham declared in the Assembly that the only attention to be paid by the Church to the interdicts of the civil courts was to disregard them, and trample them under her feet.[2] The induction at Culsalmond was declared null and void. The new minister of Glass, who had been ordained by the deposed ministers, was stripped of his license. The minister of Fintry, who had been presented to Kilmaronock, and had not been vetoed, but who had preached in Strathbogie, was refused translation from a small living to a better one. The minister of Lethendy was also deprived of his license.[3] No wonder, then, the Moderate party, and the more sober in the country, were filled with alarm.

[1] Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church;" Assembly, 1842. [2] Ibid. ii. 289.
[3] Ibid. Chapter on the Assembly of 1842.

Events moved on apace. The Bill introduced by Mr. Campbell of Monzie, the second reading of which was to be taken on the 13th of June, had been ruled by the Speaker incompetent until the consent of the Crown had been obtained, as it affected the rights of the Crown in its patronage of the Crown livings. The Government were not likely to advise her Majesty to give the requisite consent. The healing measure was frustrated. The Claim of Right, which the Marquis of Bute had engaged to lay before the Queen, was submitted to the ministry. Sir James Graham said, as the marquis himself had said in the Assembly, that if to transmit the documents had implied the adoption of their sentiments, he would have felt it to be his duty to decline to do so; but as they related to certain grievances, and were couched in respectful language, he was unwilling to intercept them.[1] It was easy to see what reply the Queen would be advised to give.

The Presbytery of Auchterarder had not taken Mr. Young on trials, although it had been held by the House of Lords that it was bound to do so. He now raised an action asking that they proceed with his trials, or else pay him damages. The Non-intrusion party had always said that they laid no claim to the living; the patron and the presentee might keep that. This, of course, simply meant that the parishioners would be deprived of the legal provision for the maintenance of their minister. But the House of Lords now said, in effect, that this arrangement could not be entertained. If the presbytery found the presentee qualified, they were bound to induct him to the living. In every case they must try whether he was qualified or not. If they did not do so they were liable in damages to the presentee. The judges in the House of Lords were great lawyers, and they were unanimous.

When this decision was made known, it became evident that the strife which had been waged so long must soon come to a close. The leaders of the Non-intrusion party intimated that they could not submit to such restrictions and penalties. Immediate steps must be taken to prepare to leave the Church.

It was resolved that a great meeting should be called, of the ministers belonging to the party, in order to make a final

[1] Cunningham, Hist. ii. 519.

representation to Government, and adopt practical measures if the representation should meet with no adequate response. Those who should attend it were indeed held to be unpledged, and many who attended it had not the slightest intention, when they left their homes, of giving their adherence to any resolution which should compel them to leave the Church. It must have been clear, however, to the more experienced what the object of the gathering was. The meeting, which was known henceforth as the "Convocation," began its sittings on Thursday the 17th of November, and it lasted till Thursday the 24th. It met in Edinburgh, and it was opened by a sermon in St. George's Church by Dr. Chalmers. Then the members adjourned to Roxburgh Church, a small building in a somewhat obscure quarter of the town, chosen, Dr. Buchanan tells us,[1] from its limited size, and so being more suitable for free and friendly conversation than a larger edifice. The meetings were private, and no authentic record of them has ever been published. They were attended only by ministers, elders as well as the general public being rigorously excluded. It has transpired, however, from the statements of some who were present at the meetings, but who did not ultimately leave the Church, that the unanimity was sometimes by no means perfect, and that deep and bitter dissent was occasionally heard from ministers who imagined that, as they had gone there unpledged to any course, it would be possible to retain their neutrality. There can be no doubt, however, that a warm enthusiasm generally prevailed, and that by the dexterous management of the leaders a great schism in the Church was practically accomplished. The convention resulted in two sets of resolutions being adopted, the first setting forth the Church's alleged grievances; the second pledging those who accepted them to abandon the Church, if Government should persist in giving no redress. A manifesto was also prepared, setting forth the views of the Convocationists, and it was circulated in thousands throughout the country.

But the Non-intrusion party did not trust entirely to this printed address. They now began to organize deputations to every part of Scotland, which should hold meetings, and instruct

[1] "Ten Years' Conflict," 539.

the people, as they called it, in the Church question. Towards the close of 1842, and in the beginning of 1843, these deputations began their work. Wherever they could secure the parish church they held their meetings there, and where the minister or the heritors were inimical to their movement, they secured any hall or barn they could lay their hands on. The extent of the secession was without doubt largely due to this agitation. Unfortunately the Moderate party, either deprecating controversy or miscalculating the strength of the influence against them, did not take measures for systematically meeting and answering the agitators. Where they did do so, or where the minister himself was at pains to frankly expound the whole subject to his people, the secession in general made but slight headway.[1]

On the 20th January, 1843, the judicial decision was pronounced which finally cleared the path for the secession. The right of the chapel ministers to sit in the church courts, in virtue of the Assembly's Chapel Act of 1834, had been questioned more than once, but it had not yet been subjected to a judicial process. In 1839, however, the Associate Synod of Seceders had returned to the Church. One of these, a Mr. Clelland, whose church was situated in the village of Stewarton in Ayrshire, had attached himself to the establishment, along with his brethren. The Presbytery of Irvine, in whose bounds Stewarton lies, immediately placed his name on the roll of the presbytery, and they were proceeding to designate a territory to be his parish, *quoad sacra*, when they were stopped by an interdict at the instance of the heritors. The case came before the synod and the General Assembly, and finally the presbytery resolved to defend themselves against the interdict in the civil courts. By eight of the judges against five, it was decided that the church courts had no power to create parishes *quoad sacra*, or to admit their ministers as members. Thus both the Acts which had been so strongly opposed by the Moderate party ten years before, and against which they had entered their dissent, had, as they predicted would be the case, been found to be illegal. Of course the dominant party in the Church would

[1] See the account of a meeting in the parish of Loudon in the "Life of Norman Macleod," with his manly protest, and its results, i. 193, 194.

not agree to this decision. Apart from the higher ground which they alleged, it would at once place them in the minority. They converted it into another instance of undue interference by the civil courts, and insisted upon it as an additional reason for breaking up the establishment.

In the meantime Sir James Graham had addressed a decisive letter to Dr. Welsh, the moderator of the Assembly, in reply to the Claim of Right and the petition for the abolition of patronage. It was well worthy of that wise statesman. It pointed out that the claim of the Church rested upon the assumption that the civil courts had exceeded their powers, and that if the Church were to be the judge of this, decisions of civil courts, and even Acts of Parliament, would henceforth be useless. It was difficult occasionally to decide whether a matter were civil or spiritual, but it was always a matter of law; and in all questions of law the House of Lords was the court of ultimate appeal. The Assembly itself had acknowledged this. It had submitted the question at issue—the legality of the Veto Act—to the Court of Session. It had appealed to the House of Lords. All parties must abide by the decision of that tribunal. The law had been ascertained in the constitutional way, and it could not be evaded, unless churches were to be exempted from obedience to the law of the land. Government were willing to legislate upon the principles of Lord Aberdeen's Bill, but they could not concede the Church's Claim of Right.[1]

As soon as the letter was received, a meeting of commission was hurriedly called to decide what should be done. When it met Dr. Cook objected to the chapel ministers being retained in court, in consequence of the decision in the Stewarton case. The commission resolved to retain them, upon which Dr. Cook and his friends left the meeting. The same course was followed by several presbyteries, after the decision in the Stewarton case became known. The Non-intrusionists, as a last resource, resolved to petition Parliament.

The petition was laid before the House of Commons by Mr. Fox Maule on the 7th of March. He moved at the same time for an inquiry into the alleged grievances. He was supported by Mr. Campbell of Monzie and Sir George Grey, although the

[1] Letter of Sir James Graham, dated Whitehall, 4th January, 1843.

latter guarded himself from being held to acquiesce in the Church's claim of independent jurisdiction. Sir Robert Peel, Sir James Graham, and Lord John Russell spoke against it. The question was debated for two days, and was finally lost by 211 against 76.[1]

There had been no application to the House of Lords; but it was thought right that this branch of the legislature should also let its voice be heard on the question. A series of resolutions were accordingly brought forward by Lord Campbell, in which he pledged the house to maintain inviolate the rights and privileges of the Church of Scotland, and to redress any grievances that might exist, but to resist the claim for irresponsible power and for the abolition of patronage. A long discussion ensued, in which the weight and legal knowledge represented by such names, besides Lord Campbell's, as those of Lord Brougham and Lord Cottenham, were against the pretensions of the Non-intrusionists. It was truly said in the House of Lords, as it had been in the House of Commons, that their claim equalled, if it did not exceed, the assumptions of the Church of Rome.[2] In demanding that the Church should be the arbiter as to what is civil and what is spiritual, they claimed in effect that it should be supreme over every other tribunal in the land. It is said that Sir Robert Peel wavered for a few days after the debate in the House of Commons. He was anxious to save the Church; and he had letters assuring him that there would unquestionably be a large secession. Then counter despatches from members of the middle party assured him of the contrary, and he remained firm.[3] What could he or his government have done, other than they did?

The Non-intrusionists now prepared for the crisis. Their theory was that the establishment was henceforth useless for the supply of the means of grace to the people. In every parish in Scotland, therefore, these means must be provided. Dr. Chalmers, whose powers as an orator and as an economist strangely transcended his legal acumen, had devised and matured his sustentation scheme. He had declaimed upon it until it had assumed splendid proportions. In every parish, almost, the organization

[1] Newspapers of the day; Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church," ii. 336. [2] Ibid. 340–352.
[3] Cunningham's Hist., ii. 526.

was perfect for maintaining "the Church," as the outgoing party still liked to call themselves. The popular enthusiasm was at a white heat. It is safe to say that but a small minority of the people really apprehended the points in dispute. But many had taken their views of the question from the excited and exaggerated utterances of the deputations, and they believed that the cause of the Non-intrusion party was the cause of God.

An attempt was conceived, and at first it was supposed it might be successful, to pack the Assembly with adherents of the Non-intrusion party, so that a resolution might be passed by a majority severing their connection with the State, and thus bringing about a disruption. If this had been attempted, it would of course have had to go down to presbyteries in terms of the Barrier Act, and every one knew that the result of any such ordeal would have been fatal to the pretensions of the Non-intrusion party. At first it was thought that the returns of commissioners, by the presbyteries, would make the two parties so very nearly equal, that it would be at least doubtful on which side the majority might be found. A preliminary trial of strength was to have been ventured in the election of the moderator. The Non-intrusionists were to have put forward Dr. Chalmers; and it was supposed that the magic of his name would be certain to carry the votes of many, who might be opposed to a less celebrated candidate. The Moderate party, on the other hand, had resolved to propose Principal M'Farlan, who, like Dr. Chalmers, had occupied the chair many years before, but whose great services in the cause of sober and prudent churchmanship rendered him well entitled to the renewal of the honour. As the weeks passed on, however, and the reports of the returns of commissioners from presbyteries to the Assembly became known, it was apparent that any such project was hopeless, and that the most the Non-intrusionists could do would be to secure a large and influential secession. It was rumoured, at the time, that even this had to be carefully manipulated, and that some of the ministers whose names were certain to shed lustre upon the exodus, if they should join it, were carefully guarded, lest counter-influence should be brought to bear upon them, and they should desert the cause at the last moment.

Thursday, the 18th of May, was the day of the meeting of

the Assembly. The Marquis of Bute was again lord high Commissioner, and never was the opening pageant conducted with more splendour. The old picture gallery in Holyrood, where the levee was held, was crowded. All parties, but especially the Non-intrusionists, flocked to do honour to the representative of royalty. By a singular co-incidence the portrait of William the Third got loosened from the nail on which it hung, and in the middle of the courtly bustle it fell to the ground with a crash—a voice, doubtless that of a Non-intrusionist, exclaiming, "There goes the Revolution Settlement." It was just such an incident as the author of the "Ten Years' Conflict" knew well how to turn to good account.

In the High Church, where the opening sermon was preached, a great crowd awaited the arrival of the Commissioner. Dr. Welsh, the retiring moderator, was in the pulpit, as was then customary, long before the blare of trumpets announced the approach of the court. His sermon was from the text, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

The Assembly met in St. Andrew's Church, which was filled to overflowing. When the Commissioner appeared, the moderator, who had preceded him by a few minutes, bowed to him, as is the courteous custom. Then he pronounced the short opening prayer. Usually the first business is to make up the roll and to constitute the Assembly. But according to concerted arrangement Dr. Welsh now intimated that, in consequence of certain events which had happened, he must protest against going further. He then read the protest which had previously been drawn up, and which had been subscribed by 203 members. Having done so, he laid it upon the table, took up his cocked hat and left the chair. He was followed by Chalmers, Candlish, Cunningham, and other eminent members of the Non-intrusion party: the old men sad and tearful, the younger heedless and exultant, at what they had accomplished. The side to the left of the moderator's chair was that on which the members of the Non-intrusion party usually sat. When the secession was complete, it was almost empty.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

FROM THE SECESSION OF 1843 TO THE PRESENT DAY.

After the Secession—Principal M'Farlan appointed moderator of the Assembly—The Queen's letter—The Veto Act regarded as null and void—The Strathbogie ministers regarded as never deposed—Chapel Act declared incompetent, and repealed—Protest of Seceders—Supply of ordinances—No "Disruption," but lamentable secession—The "Benefices" Act—Sir James Graham's Act—The "site" question—Poor law—United Presbyterian Church—Foreign missions—The endowment scheme—"Innovations" controversy—Alarm of clergy—Dr. Lee called to the bar—Assembly enjoins discontinuance of prayer-book—Declaratory Act that worship is to be regulated by presbyteries—Act of 1866—Church Service Society—"The Scottish Hymnal"—The Education Act—Patronage abolished—Creed subscription—New formula—Internal affairs—Outward prosperity of the Church—Agitation for disestablishment—The Cardross case—The desirability of Union.

No one could witness such a secession without the deepest regret. Some of the most famous and the most earnest ministers of the Church had left it for ever. Many of the most pious of the Church's sons and daughters would certainly follow their beloved pastors. A considerable number of those who were thus making so great a sacrifice were incapable of appreciating the principles at stake. They had followed the more prominent leaders; perhaps in a moment of excitement they had made rash pledges, which they felt in honour bound to fulfil. Pity for men in such a position, and sympathy with those dependent upon them, could not fail to be excited as they moved away.

But when the first sentiments of regret had subsided, they were succeeded by a feeling of unspeakable relief. It was like passing from the din and turmoil of battle into the calm of peace. For ten long years the constitutional party had been harassed by the illegal and tyrannous action of the dominant majority. Much against their will they had been compelled to wage bitter warfare. They had to contend not only for the principles which they held sacred, but for their very ecclesiastical existence. Instead of being free to direct their whole energy to the great object of the ministry—the preaching of the everlasting Gospel—the organizing of those schemes of missionary and philanthropic effort to which they would gladly

have devoted their best powers; the claims of fierce controversy asserted themselves, and absorbed their energies and their thought. All that was now over. The men who—doubtless with honest motives—had brought the Church into the midst of her troubles had seen meet to depart. The hopeless task was no longer necessary of endeavouring to enlighten those who were too much prejudiced to be able to see. Resistance to their despotism was called for no more. With all its regret at the severance of old and close ties, well might the Church of Scotland give thanks at her deliverance. Weakened, therefore, in one sense, although really stronger than it had been for many a day—sad, but not disheartened, the Assembly calmly betook itself to the work it had to do.

A few of the outgoing ministers and elders lingered for a little after their friends had gone, to witness what they probably fancied would be the utter discomfiture of the brethren who remained behind. They must have been strangely undeceived. As soon as the seceders had fairly departed, the business of the Assembly went forward as systematically as if nothing had occurred. It is to be noted that the court had not been constituted when the seceders left. The roll had not been made up; the moderator had not been elected; the queen's Commissioner had not presented his commission. To speak accurately, they did not leave as members of Assembly; many of them would not have been permitted to take their seats, as it had now been ascertained that they had no legal title to be there. Those who left the Assembly Hall left as a number of individuals, to take measures in another place for an orderly separation from the establishment. When they had done so, the Assembly proceeded to transact its customary business. As the moderator of the previous Assembly, who, according to old usage, occupies the chair until the new moderator is elected, had on this occasion left the meeting before it was constituted, Dr. Mearns moved that Principal Haldane, of St. Andrews, should take the chair, who accordingly did so. The roll of members was then read. It was then moved by the chairman, and seconded by Lord Selkirk, that the Very Reverend Principal M'Farlan of Glasgow should be elected moderator. When Principal M'Farlan had taken his place, the Marquis of Bute

gave in his commission, along with the customary letter from the Queen. The Assembly was thus fully constituted.

The Queen's letter is usually a somewhat formal document, expressing her Majesty's confidence in the Assembly, and her resolution to maintain the Church; and intimating the name of the nobleman who is to act as her Commissioner. But on the present occasion the letter departed from its customary formal phraseology, and was couched in terms of more than ordinary earnestness and anxiety. The Assembly was reminded that unity was the bond of peace, but that schism must tend to injure the Church, from which Scotland had derived such blessings; that as the rights and property of the Church of Scotland were enforced and protected by law, the clergy are bound to be examples of obedience to law. The letter went on to say, apparently in view of the rumour that an attempt would be made to formally dissolve the connection between Church and State, that that union was indissoluble so long as the statutes affecting it remained unrepealed; that it could not be terminated by the will or declaration of any number of individuals, while at the same time any who were dissatisfied were at liberty to renounce the State connection for themselves individually. It was noticed that the Veto law, although declared to be illegal, had not been rescinded, and the house was reminded that any conflict between the ecclesiastical and the civil powers must necessarily be attended with pernicious consequences. If Parliament should see fit to legislate so as to afford greater security to the people to state objections, and to the Church for determining upon them, her Majesty would gladly ratify such an Act. The law, as regarded ministers of unendowed churches, had been laid down, and her Majesty hoped would be obeyed, until considered and amended, if need be, by the legislature; and in saying that the Marquis of Bute had been appointed Commissioner, the Queen added the significant statement—"He possesses our full authority for the exercise of our royal prerogative in all matters relating to the present Assembly, in which, in obedience to our instructions to him, he may be called upon to act for us, or on our behoof." It was a well-timed and dignified assertion of the claims of law and order, and of the measures to which

the Crown might find it necessary to resort, if further encroachments on the legal position were persisted in.[1]

When the Queen's letter had been duly heard, the Assembly had to proceed to the unwonted process of considering the work of the last nine years, and to say how the irregularities, which in consequence of the secession were now universally admitted, should be disposed of. There was a discussion as to whether the Veto Act should be formally rescinded, by a proposal to that effect being sent down to presbyteries. It must be kept in view that some of the members of this Assembly had only very recently seen their errors, and attached themselves to the constitutional party. Up till now they had been on the other side, actively aiding in the procedure which had brought all the trouble upon the Church. Some of them had at last seen the illegality and imprudence of their former proceedings; some of them had shrunk from the sacrifices which their reckless courses entailed upon them, and were glad of the apology of the *liberum arbitrium*, or Lord Aberdeen's Bill, or any conceivable reason that might pacify their consciences, and enable them to remain in the Church. They could hardly be called a strength to the Church either at the time, or for long afterwards; for their "remaining in" was generally a matter of expediency, and they had little sympathy with the true Moderate policy which had so often been the safety of the Church, and which had proved itself to be so once more. The constitutional party were generous, and were glad to retain them; but they were a source of disquiet nevertheless. Some of them had voted but two short years before for the deposition of the Strathbogie ministers. They could not be expected to be hearty in disapproving of the Veto Act upon which they had staked so much, and the result of which disapproval must be the recognition, as ministers of the Church without a stain upon their character, but on the contrary with every expression of commendation as having fought a good fight, of the very men whom they had done their best to degrade and dishonour. Some of them chafed, as was not unnatural, at the proposition that the Veto Act should simply be held as null and void—erased from the statute book. There was discussion about it, but ultimately

[1] See Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church," ii. 364, 365.

Dr. Cook's motion, which was to this effect, and that presbyteries should proceed in the settlement of ministers as they had done before the Veto Act was passed, was adopted without a vote.[1]

Then came the question of the Strathbogie ministers. They had again sent in commissioners as other presbyteries had done, claiming by that act that their position was intact. Were their commissioners to take their seats in the Assembly at once? or was their deposition to be formally rescinded? Dr. Mearns moved that they be at once received. They had been deposed by an Assembly illegally constituted, and because they had disobeyed an act of the Assembly which had been found illegal, as the Moderate party had all along supposed it to be. The Strathbogie ministers had never therefore been deposed at all. In making his motion, Dr. Mearns took occasion to bring out a most important point in the case—viz. that the Strathbogie ministers had never asked the Court of Session to remove a spiritual sentence, as was often alleged or insinuated by the other side. They had only asked that the sentence—which they were going to show was null and void—should not be intimated to their people, and that no steps be taken to fill up their places. Discussion of course ensued, but ultimately the motion of Dr. Mearns was carried by 142 to 33.[2]

The Chapel Act was next taken up on a resolution of Lord Belhaven, so often lord high Commissioner, who sat in this Assembly as an elder, modified so as to meet views expressed by Dr. Robertson and Dr. Mearns. It was declared that it had been "incompetently passed," and was "of necessity repealed."[3] The ecclesiastical censures upon the ministers of Marnoch, Culsalmond, Lethendy, and Glass were unanimously removed. They had been imposed for no other reason than that they had applied to the civil courts for redress against what they believed to be the illegal action of the General Assembly against them, in which belief they were found to be justified. Finally, the cases of Mr. Wilson of Stranraer and Mr. Livingston of Cambusnethan were dealt with. The sentence of deposition pronounced upon the former was repealed, as having been illegal and unconstitutional. But the right was reserved to parties interested to make any competent inquiry, and to take any

[1] Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church," ii. 373. [2] Ibid. 376. [3] Ibid. 378.

competent steps in regard to Mr. Wilson's conduct. In the case of Mr. Livingston, the Assembly repealed a sentence of deposition which had been pronounced against him by the Presbytery of Hamilton, because that presbytery had been improperly constituted, the chapel ministers having been sitting in it illegally. But the Assembly remitted to the presbytery, which was now at length legally constituted, to begin the proceedings anew, and to conduct them according to the laws of the Church.[1] The seceders had made a very unfair handle of this case. They represented the interference of the civil courts as an attempt to screen the criminal minister from the penalties of his offences,[2] whereas, as the reader will doubtless remember, the only question decided by the Court of Session was as to the legal competency of the body trying him to try him at all. So far from being an illustration, as was often asserted, of the subjection of the church courts to the civil, it was simply a declaration that while church courts have unlimited jurisdiction in matters spiritual over the members of their own Church, they must in all cases proceed according to their own constitution and the contract which they have entered into with the State, or, in other words, with the people of this country.

On the 24th of May the Assembly took up the protest which Dr. Welsh had left upon the table. Dr. Cook advised that it should be gravely considered and replied to, and that a committee should be appointed to draw up an answer, which should be circulated throughout the country. The ministers who had signed it were declared, on his motion, to be no longer ministers of the Church, and incapable of holding charges in the establishment. The elders were declared no longer elders in the Church of Scotland.[3] Before the matter was finished, the "Deed of Demission," subscribed by the seceding ministers, was brought into the House, by which the seceding ministers had formally abandoned their livings and their position in the Church of Scotland, and had completed the secession. Although the committee was duly appointed, they never gave in a report, and the protest was never formally answered by the

[1] Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church," ii. 379. [2] "Claim of Right" and "Protest."
[3] Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church," ii. 383.

Assembly. To some extent—as has been already said—the Moderate party were hampered by the presence of so many amongst them who had been sympathizers with the Non-intrusion party, till within a short period of their secession. Any formal reply to the protest upon true lines would have been extremely distasteful to that party, which it was nevertheless desirable to retain in the Church. After the first sentiments of natural indignation at the character of the document left upon the table had subsided, it was felt that silence was, in all the circumstances, the most fitting reply to it. The truth is, that every statement in it had been answered again and again before ever it was written, and the answers had been confirmed by the highest courts of the land. The seceders took advantage of the Church's silence, and spoke of it as the "unanswered and unanswerable protest." The marvel is that they should have permitted so vulnerable a document to be their final utterance on the momentous questions they had raised. While the Church did not herself think it advisable to vouchsafe a formal reply, there has been no lack of rejoinders; and those, who wish to see for themselves how entirely unfounded are the "Claim of Right" and the "Protest," would do well to read the overwhelming arguments in which the author of "Papers on the Free Church" demonstrates how untenable is the protesters' position.[1]

The Assembly had to make provision for the supply of religious ordinances in parishes left vacant by the secession, until ministers were appointed to them. Special means had to be taken for this purpose. A committee was appointed, with Dr. Clark of St. Andrew's, Edinburgh, as its convener. The ordinary rules for admission of students of divinity to trials for license were to some extent relaxed. Every facility was afforded, consistent with the laws and constitution of the Church, to dissenting ministers who might wish to join the establishment. The committee entered upon its work as soon as the Assembly rose. In some instances leave was given to presbyteries to meet during the sitting of the Assembly, in order to make arrangements for the supply of the pulpits which would in many cases be left vacant on the first Sunday after the secession took place. The people rallied round the ministers

[1] "Papers on the Principles and Real Position of the Free Church:" Macgeorge.

who had charge of this work, and they succeeded in accomplishing the object they had in view, to an extent which showed that the National Church still retained its hold on the affections of the people of Scotland. Over a large part of the country, especially where the ministers remained in their parishes, the secession was not greatly felt. It was only in the Highlands of Sutherland and Ross-shire, where the supply of Gaelic speaking preachers was small, and where superstition was still largely intermingled with the piety of the people, that the secession could in any sense be said to be general.

But the state of affairs was sufficiently grave to excite the most serious anxiety on the part of the friends of the Church. There had indeed been no "Disruption." The State connection remained unimpaired. And notwithstanding the persistence of the seceders in designating their schism "The Disruption," there was no approach to such a consummation in their movement. "They claimed at the utmost a small and doubtful majority of the Assembly of 1843; and to uphold that claim they were compelled, on the one hand, to repudiate those members the validity of whose elections their opponents were ready to maintain; and on the other, to reckon as members those whose right to sit was not only questioned but utterly denied."[1] But when the actual numbers of the secessionist ministers throughout the Church came to be accurately reckoned, it was at once apparent that they were but a comparatively small minority. Lists were published in 1844 showing that of the 970 ministers of old parishes in the Church, 681 remained in the Church, while only 289, or less than one-third, seceded. Including the chapel ministers, who sat in presbytery illegally, there were in all 1203 ministers in the Church. Of these 752 remained, and 451 seceded. If the question "Secede" or "Remain" had been sent down to presbyteries, even when they included the chapel ministers, who had no right to sit or to vote, sixty presbyteries would have voted "Remain," and eighteen would have voted "Secede." Several of the latter would have carried this vote by a majority of only one. But if the votes of the chapel ministers had been excluded, as they must have been had the question come up after the decision

[1] Turner's "Scottish Secession of 1843," 357.

in the Stewarton case, all the presbyteries of the Church would have voted against secession, except eight or nine, these being almost entirely in the synods of Ross and Sutherland.[1]

But although there had been no disruption, there had been a large and lamentable secession. The outgoing ministers and elders had marched in procession to the hall at Canonmills which had been prepared for them, amid the enthusiastic cheers of the immense multitude of spectators who lined the streets. Chalmers was elected moderator, and as he gave out the words to be sung, "O send Thy light forth, and Thy truth," the sunlight, breaking through a bank of clouds, streamed into the hall, and was not unnaturally accepted as an omen of gladness.[2] The popular enthusiasm was excited in favour of the men who had made such sacrifices for conscience' sake. Without inquiring into the merits of the question, in by far the greater number of cases indeed, without being capable of grasping the points at issue, whole congregations left the Church along with their ministers. New and untried men had to take the places of the veterans who had gone, and to fill these as best they could. The missionaries in the far east, misled by the strangely perverted representations of Dr. Duff, seceded to a man.[3] The Synod of England had testified its adherence to the "Free Church," as the seceders now called themselves, in terms most offensive to the Church.[4] The Presbyterian Church of Ireland also severed themselves from fellowship with the Church of Scotland.

The enthusiasm of the supporters of the seceders knew no bounds. They were regarded as saints and martyrs. They were the custodiers of true religion in Scotland. The Establishment was henceforth utterly useless for the furtherance of the Gospel. Crowds waited on the ministrations of the ministers, who went forth through Scotland to propagate their own views and to promote the secession. Devoted ladies vied with each other in attending to the comfort of the self-sacrificing

[1] Turner's "Scottish Secession," 359, 360.

[2] Buchanan, "Ten Years' Conflict;" Beith, "Memories of Disruption Times;" Turner, "Scottish Secession."

[3] See quotations from Dr. Duff's "Lectures," in the dissertation on the Church in Relation to Law and the State, in this work.

[4] Macgeorge's "Papers on the Free Church," ii. 6, 7.

men.[1] Money flowed into the coffers of the seceders. Riding the wave of success, the grateful sounds of popular favour greeting them wherever they went; assured on all hands that their cause was the cause of God, that to them was committed the religious welfare of the people of Scotland, and that the eyes of Christendom and of the world were centred upon them and their brave doings, it required but little effort to secede, even when the sacrifices were greatest; often, in addition to the popular applause, there was no sacrifice, but great gain.

The real sacrifice was made by those who remained in the Church; the real courage was shown by those who stood by the truth, and by the old institution, when all things seemed against her. It was no slight matter to part with old friends, and to be conscious that an insuperable barrier must henceforth separate from them; to know that family relationships had been broken up; that households had become divided; that the once united parish was estranged; that even within the Church all were not loyal to principle, but that some were there whose hearts were elsewhere. This was what the churchman had to realize, when the secession had actually taken place. The marvel is that so few yielded to the temptation to follow the procession to Canonmills, and that so many were found to rally round the Church of their fathers, and, notwithstanding all the obloquy that was heaped upon them, to do battle still for the right. Obloquy was hurled at them in no measured terms. These days have long since passed away, and it would serve no good purpose to quote the hard sayings against the Church of Scotland, which were then so lavishly uttered. They had better be forgotten. But if any one is curious to know what the churchmen of that time had to endure, and to understand how principle alone could have strengthened them to disregard it, they will find abundant evidence of the need of

[1] "As I preached with some animation I soon became drenched with perspiration. Some kind lady seated in the front of the gallery on my left, at intervals showered over my person eau de Cologne so skilfully and so abundantly as to create a really refreshing atmosphere. The circumstance amused me. The afternoon service was after the same manner as that of the forenoon—the same crowding, the same heat, and the same kind visitations of eau de Cologne, now from both sides. The bedewing me with it must have been dexterously managed, as I never ascertained that any one almost perceived it—certainly nobody shared in it, except myself."—*Beith's "Memories of Disruption Times,"* 232, 233.

both, in the "Papers on the Free Church," which have already been referred to.[1]

The churchmen of '43, however, turned to the work before them with faith and courage. "I am not afraid," said Norman Macleod, in the Assembly. "By the grace of God we shall succeed. We shall endeavour to extinguish the fire which has been kindled, and every fire, but the light of the glorious Gospel, which we shall, I hope, fan into a brighter flame. We shall try to bring our ship safe to harbour; and if we haul down the one flag, 'Retract! No, never!' we shall hoist another, 'Despair! No, never!' And if I live to come to this Assembly an old man, I am confident that a grateful posterity will vindicate our present position, in endeavouring through good report and bad report to preserve this great national institution as a blessing to them and to their children's children."[2]

The Government were naturally desirous to conciliate the "middle party" in the Church, who had gone so far with the Non-intrusionists, but had deprecated the step of abandoning the establishment. They had strongly urged that a Bill should be introduced into Parliament to give greater facilities to the people in objecting to an unacceptable presentee. It was in the hope that this would be done, indeed, that some of the party had retained their connection with the Church. But the Moderate party were by no means desirous that any legislation should be undertaken at present. They felt that the power of taking exception to the "life, literature, or doctrine" of the presentee, which the people already had, afforded them a sufficiently wide field. Any objection stated upon these grounds would be definite, and grounded upon solid reasons. Any good objection to a man's life, or literature, or doctrine, would be sufficient to disqualify him for any parish; and the converse seemed equally true, that if no objection could be made good to a man's life, or literature, or doctrine, he must be suitable for any parish; unless, indeed, there were physical disqualifications, such as feebleness of voice, or impaired health, which the Church had always claimed the power of considering. If there was to be legislation at all, it should be only declaratory of what the law actually was; there

[1] Macgeorge, "Papers on the Principles and Real Position of the Free Church"
[2] "Life of Norman Macleod," i. 190, 191.

was no need for further legislation: there was considerable risk in attempting it, in the opinion of the Moderate party. The middle party, however, had sufficient influence with Government to induce them to undertake the difficult task. Lord Aberdeen again threw himself into the breach, and practically reproduced his former Bill. The Assembly of 1843 had risen before this became known to the Moderate party, and it was only in the commission and in the inferior courts that its provisions could be discussed. These seemed to the Moderates to be unsatisfactory in several respects, and full of danger. The Bill did not permit the people to object to life or doctrine—any exceptions on that score must be followed out by libel; but it gave power to the presbyteries, in judging of objections, to "have regard to the whole circumstances of the parish," "to the spiritual welfare and edification of the congregation," and more especially "to the number and character of the objectors." The party, led by Dr. Cook, strongly opposed these provisions, as introducing the element of vagueness, which had always been complained of in the Veto Act, and creating a system under which objections, instead of being looked upon as a last resource, would be practically invited. The middle party, however, warmly welcomed the measure, and it was approved of by a majority in the commission. The Government were known to have been ill-informed as to the sentiments of those who had really fought the battle of law and order during these long ten years, and they took their counsel from men who, till recently, had been on the other side. They had political reasons also, it was said, for going on with the measure. It was passed through both Houses of Parliament accordingly, and became the law of the land; but it was not long before the practical working of the measure demonstrated that in this instance, as in so many others, the discernment of the Moderate party had been only too true.[1]

The Bill of Lord Aberdeen—the Benefices Act, as it was commonly called—became law on the 17th of August, 1843. In less than a year from that time, on the 19th of July, 1844, Sir James Graham's Bill became law, and provided for the erection of new parishes *quoad sacra*. The chapel ministers

[1] See Bryce's "Ten Years of the Church," vol. ii. chap. 11.

had, as we have said, been admitted to seats in presbytery, and to the privileges of parish ministers without legal sanction. That legal sanction was now given by Sir James Graham's Act. It required that whenever a district was to be disjoined from the old parish, and erected into a parish *quoad sacra*, an annual stipend of £120, or £100 with a house for the minister, should first be secured; that thereafter a process should be regularly carried through the Court of Teinds, and when it was intimated that this had been satisfactorily concluded, and a decree pronounced erecting the new parish, the minister was entitled to take his seat in the church courts. It is in virtue of this Act that the splendid addition of four hundred parishes has been made to the equipment of the Church of Scotland since it was passed. It has undoubtedly proved a great aid in church extension, and in providing ordinances where additional means of grace are required. Its principal defect is that it has rated the endowment to be provided at too low a figure. It contemplated the provision of the necessary funds by voluntary subscription, and not by any draught on the national purse. Probably the promoters of the Bill thought that it would be unreasonable to expect that any larger sum could be procured than the Bill specified. Experience has shown, however, that the difficulty is not so great as was anticipated. Very likely had the minimum endowment been fixed at £200 instead of £100, a greater effort would have been exerted, and the results would have been nearly the same. As it is, the objectionable custom of charging seat rents has been admitted, in order to eke out the altogether inadequate stipend of the minister—a system opposed to the true theory of an Established Church, whose essential feature is that the parish church is open to every parishioner, and the parish minister is enabled to supply Gospel ordinances to them "without money and without price." Thus, however, within little more than a year of the secession, the Church had practically all that the seceders claimed. How very different might the position of Scotland have been to-day had she sought to obtain these measures at first in a legal and orderly manner, instead of proceeding in the arbitrary mode which resulted in the schism.

Meantime the "Free Church," as the seceders now called

themselves, were actively engaged building their churches and manses and schools, and organizing a complete parochial machinery for the whole of Scotland. This was their aim; for they no longer regarded the ordinances of the establishment as fitted to supply the spiritual wants of the community. They held the State Church to have been guilty of great unfaithfulness, and to have betrayed what they called "the crown rights of the Redeemer." Nevertheless they were not able in practice to carry out their theory. In many districts one church and one minister had to be sufficient for several parishes. For a time they had occasional difficulty in procuring sites on which to build their churches. Proprietors who were attached to the State Church, did not feel it incumbent on them to dispose of their property, for the purpose of allowing people, whom they regarded as schismatics, to obtain facilities for maintaining and propagating their particular views, especially as the seceders often set up their buildings in close and somewhat offensive proximity to the old parish church. The Free Church declared that this was an unjustifiable exercise of proprietorship. They represented the refusal of sites to them as subjecting them to a species of persecution. They drew graphic pictures of the hardships of people compelled, for conscience' sake, to abandon the parish church, and yet not suffered to erect a place of worship for themselves, but being forced to worship, in all weathers, on the bleak hillside, or on the shore of the stormy sea. The subject was at length brought before Parliament, and a commission was appointed to inquire into it. There was no legislation on the matter; but more reasonable views were adopted on both sides. Landed proprietors began to see that it served no good end to refuse to allow a Free Church congregation to obtain a site, on which to build their place of worship. Refusals gradually ceased, and the seceders were allowed to build their churches where they thought fit.

There were some minor results from the great secession which emerged only after it had been some time in operation. The most emphatic of these was perhaps the demand for a legal provision for the poor, which became now too clamant to be resisted. Hitherto the poor of each parish had been main-

tained—at first by the voluntary contributions of the members of the Church at the Sunday services—and as the first secession reduced the numbers of the adherents of the establishment, this fund was supplemented by voluntary assessments among the heritors. But the aspect of the parochial economy of Scotland was greatly altered by the last secession. For a time the congregations of the establishment were to some extent weakened, and in some cases the funds at the disposal of the minister and kirk session for charitable purposes were diminished. But besides that, there was now a jealousy of the powers and privileges of the parish ministers, which did not formerly exist. The Free Church claimed to be the true Church of Scotland. She did not like to quietly admit the influence of the ministers of the State Church in the distribution of alms. All her weight was therefore thrown into the agitation for a legal provision for the poor; and in the end the Act was passed which relieved the ministers and kirk sessions from a burden which they had borne willingly, although it was often a painful and disagreeable duty which was imposed upon them, and provided that the poor of the country should henceforth be maintained by a legal assessment on the ratepayers. The secession hurried on this movement without doubt. But it is clear that the necessities of the country would have demanded some such measure at no distant date. The expense of the parochial arrangements for the relief of the poor is often five or six times what it was under the old system; for in addition to the outlay for maintenance, an elaborate system of management has to be kept up at a great cost. But in the altered circumstances, and with the growth of the democratic spirit, it is probable that the operation of the poor law has had the best effects upon the peace of the country. The spirit of honest independence still prevails; but the working-man knows that should his own exertions utterly fail, and dire poverty descend upon him, his family can always fall back upon a legal provision which, however small, will save them from utter starvation.

The divisions which had separated the original seceders from one another were now to a considerable extent brought to an end. The Burghers and the Anti-burghers had united in 1820. They took the name of the United Secession. The heat of the

Voluntary controversy had insensibly drawn all who were practical Voluntaries towards each other. The Relief body, which had originally professed the principles of the State Church, began to tend towards Voluntaryism, and to desire a union with the other seceders. In 1847 this union was accomplished. The Relief and the Secession Churches came together and became one, calling themselves the United Presbyterian Church. The union was a practical illustration of how greatly strength is fostered by unity. Instead of barely existing as a number of weak and unimportant sects, the united church has grown to be a power in the country, wielding much influence by its numbers and by its wealth, including men of the highest character in its ministry, and setting a noble example to other churches, in the energy and liberality which it displays in the sphere of foreign missions.

As soon as the Church had recovered from the first shock of the secession of 1843, she proceeded to reorganize her machinery both at home and abroad. The Foreign Mission had been completely denuded of its staff, but in a very short time the places of those who had gone were filled with devoted and earnest men, and the work went on as before. But it was in the home field that the energies of the Church were especially conspicuous. It has been noticed that Sir James Graham's Act, which was passed within a year and a half of the occurrence of the secession, had given the necessary facilities for erecting chapels into parish churches, in a legal way. But although the facilities were now afforded, the practical difficulties in the way seemed almost insuperable. Chalmers had organized the Church Extension Scheme, and by means of his apostolic zeal about two hundred chapels were built, into which the neglected population around them was sought to be gathered.[1] This had been done by voluntary contributions; but when Chalmers sought the aid of Government to have the chapels endowed, his efforts were fruitless. The Church had spent her strength in building the fabrics. Chalmers despaired of doing more in the way of voluntary effort. The Government looked coldly upon his applications for State aid, and the churches which he had built at such an immense expenditure remained unendowed,

[1] Charteris, "Life of Dr. Robertson," 228.

and therefore but very partially equipped for their aggressive work. After the secession, and when Chalmers was no longer connected with the Church, the difficulties attending the adequate completion of the Church Extension Scheme seemed for a time utterly overwhelming. The edifices which had been erected by the exertions of Chalmers and his church extension committee were claimed by the Free Church. A tedious litigation was necessary before they were declared to be the property of the Church, and at its close the chapels were found to be burdened with a debt of over £30,000. When this debt was cleared away an annual income of £24,000, or an invested capital sum of £600,000, was required to endow the churches to the slender amount of £120 annually, which the provisions of Sir James Graham's Act required.[1]

Dr. James Robertson had been known during the conflict which preceded the secession as one of the ablest debaters on the Moderate side. He was then minister of the parish of Ellon, in Aberdeenshire, and took a leading part in the proceedings of the Assembly until he was suspended for holding fellowship with the deposed Strathbogie ministers. After the secession he succeeded Dr. Welsh in the chair of church history in the University of Edinburgh, and it is as the apostle of church endowment that his brilliant career is thenceforth known. Dr. Bennie, the minister of Lady Yester's parish, Edinburgh, had been convener of a committee appointed by the Assembly of 1843 "to promote the interests of chapels of ease." Dr. Robertson was an earnest and energetic member of that committee, and at Dr. Bennie's death, in 1846, he was elected to the convenership. No sooner was he appointed to this position than a new energy was apparent in its proceedings. The name was changed to the "committee on endowment." Statistics were collected. Chapels were classified into groups. A powerful "Statement" was issued. Appeals were directed to members of the Church, to landowners who were members of the Church of England, and to Scotsmen resident in England;[2] for Dr. Robertson had conceived the gigantic purpose, which Dr. Chalmers had regarded as impossible, of endowing the two hundred churches by the voluntary contributions of the people.

[1] Charteris, "Life of Dr. Robertson," 230. [2] Ibid. 231.

He had a firm belief in the duty of the State to provide adequate endowments for the supply of ordinances; but he saw that the circumstances of the country rendered such action on the part of the Government impossible, and he determined to rouse the Church to undertake the duty. He began by aiming at the endowment of one hundred chapels. To accomplish this he proposed to raise a great central fund, from which half the sum required for endowment (£1500) should be granted to every chapel which had locally subscribed the other half. In this way the energy and liberality of each congregation would be stimulated, and those only would secure help from the central fund who had manifested a disposition to help themselves. It was a magnificent undertaking. Dr. Robertson took it up at a time when the Church was weakened and disheartened by secession. He had to contend against the listlessness of the indifferent, and the opposition of those who regarded the scheme as quixotic and visionary. But he very soon received encouragement from friends to whom he communicated his own enthusiasm, and who contributed in many cases munificently, and in all cases cheerfully. The work went on. His strong faith and indomitable perseverance overcame every obstacle. Dr. Robertson did not live to see his own aim—the endowment of one hundred parishes—completed. Worn out with ceaseless energy, he died at a comparatively early age. But in the twelve years of his work he had collected £400,000, and had seen sixty churches endowed and forty others in the progress towards endowment.[1] His work was taken up by Dr. William Smith of North Leith, and in his hands, and in the hands of those who succeeded him, the effort has resulted in an addition to the Church of no fewer than 403 parishes at a cost to the Church of nearly £1,250,000, all the freewill-offerings of the people, and supplying religious ordinances to some of the poorest and also to some of the wealthiest localities in the country.[2]

But while Dr. Robertson and his "endowment committee" were thus prosecuting so vigorously the erection and endowment of new parishes, the style and character of the services of the Church began to press themselves upon the attention

[1] Charteris, "Life of Dr. Robertson," 372, 373. [2] Volume of Assembly Reports, 1889, 595.

of the thoughtful. The preaching had, indeed, for many years been of a very high order. It was characterized by point and fervour, and by rich evangelical views of Divine truth, often by an impassioned eloquence which riveted and overwhelmed the auditors. Of recent years these qualities had been still more apparent. A new school of preachers had arisen who had made the art of preaching their special study, and who were extending the fame of the Scottish pulpit far and wide.[1] But the other parts of the services of the sanctuary had not hitherto received the same careful attention. In most instances the devotional exercises were lengthy and loosely worded, conveying often no definite idea to the worshippers, who stood in inconvenient and irreverent attitudes while they were pronounced; in a few cases the psalmody was led by trained choirs, whose style of rendering the praise was such that the congregation regarded it as a musical display, and refrained from joining in this part of the worship, while in many country parishes the singing, led by an untrained precentor, was an outrage upon every principle of cultured devotion. For a long period, also, the Scriptures were not regularly read in public, and the substitute was an elaborate lecture, followed by a long sermon, at the same service. The close intercourse, however, between the northern and the southern parts of the kingdom, which the development of the railway system was rendering every day more intimate, began to have an influence in ecclesiastical matters, as in other ways. The High Church movement, which had originated in Oxford some years before, had now spread through many parts of England; and apart from its doctrinal peculiarities, it had tended to awaken a regard for seemliness in the conduct of public worship which was highly commendable. Church architecture, and church furniture and decoration, were also receiving great attention, and the result was that unsightly deformities were removed from the beautiful specimens of Gothic churches which abound in England; the more recent additions to the parochial edifices were in keeping with the renovated taste, and the services were rendered with a power and beauty which had long been estranged from

[1] It may not be out of place to refer to such names as those of Dr. M'Culloch, Principal Caird, Dr. Norman Macleod, Principal Tulloch, Dr. Park, Dr. Stuart, and Dr. Boyd, as specially eminent in the revival of Scottish pulpit oratory.

them. But amongst those who had been accustomed, in their residence in the south, to the refinement and dignity of the Anglican ritual, all this tended to a growing dissatisfaction with the baldness of the Scottish Presbyterian service. Scottish Episcopacy was no longer in disfavour. In Edinburgh and other large centres it had now taken a deep root. The dissensions in the National Church had to some extent aided its growth; for many were glad to take refuge in the seemly calm of its communion from the fierce strife of the "Ten Years' Conflict." It had been shown that an appalling number of the working classes were living apart from ordinances altogether. The Endowment and the Home Mission schemes were at work endeavouring to meet that evil. But it was evident that the upper classes were, to a large extent, being alienated also from the National Church. What could be done to prevent the exodus, or to bring them back?

This question had occurred with great force to Dr. Robert Lee, minister of Old Greyfriars Church, in Edinburgh, and professor of biblical criticism in the university of that city. Dr. Lee was a man of much erudition and great earnestness, a polished speaker and skilful debater. He was essentially a Moderate in church polity, though by no means such in his preaching. But his prelections in the chair of criticism, which were bold and uncompromising, had laid him open to some dull suspicion of being not altogether sound in the faith. The truth was, that the science of criticism, as applied to Scripture, was not understood in those days. Many of those who regarded the Word of God with supreme reverence, accepted every syllable contained in the English translation of the Scriptures as of Divine origin, and resented, as profane sacrilege, even the hint that in some cases human errors might have crept into the text. Dr. Lee laboured to show his students that the truest reverence consisted in the effort to eliminate all such errors from the sacred record. He applied to the text of Scripture the canons of scholarly criticism. But this method, although now universally admitted, was at that time regarded as fraught with danger, and Dr. Lee was in many quarters looked upon as a propagator of heresy. When, therefore, it became known that he was directing his attention to the improvement of the worship of his church,

it was assumed by those, who believed him to be of at least questionable orthodoxy, that the changes he contemplated in the conduct of public worship were another phase of his so-called revolutionary tendencies. But it was in no such spirit that Dr. Lee approached the subject. He had long and deeply pondered over the subject of the Presbyterian ritual, and he saw that some change was absolutely requisite if the Church was to maintain her hold upon the affections of the cultured.

A favourable opportunity occurred for him to embody his ideas. The church of Old Greyfriars had been destroyed by fire shortly after he was settled in it. He had worshipped for some years with his congregation in the Assembly Hall as colleague to the minister of the Tolbooth parish. But the old church was rebuilt, and on his return to it he resolved to exemplify his theories of the proper conduct of worship. He proposed that the congregation should stand to sing and kneel at prayer. He introduced first a harmonium, and finally an organ, to accompany the praise. He procured the services of accomplished vocalists, who rendered anthems and chanted the Psalms with much artistic effect. He administered the communion at one service, instead of at a series of consecutive tables, as had been the custom for generations. He celebrated marriages in church instead of in private. He composed a great variety of prayers for use in Divine worship, had them printed in a book, and openly read them at the public services. He introduced also certain changes in the order in worship, in harmony with the earlier usage of the Reformed Church.

All this was sufficiently harmless, nay laudable. Every change was warmly appreciated by his own people, and regarded as a very great improvement upon the old ritual. His church, which had never recovered its numbers after the secession, again became crowded. Not only were the people delighted with the service, but they discovered that Dr. Lee was an able and most attractive preacher. The cry soon arose, however, that dangerous innovations were being practised in the church of Old Greyfriars. Not only was Dr. Lee undermining the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures, he was now aiming at a revolution in the presbyterian worship, and substituting a mongrel nondescript in its place. Some of his

brethren in the presbytery regarded these innovations, as they called them, with much jealousy. The subject came before the church courts. In presbytery, synod, and General Assembly Dr. Lee defended his position with overwhelming power; maintaining every step he had taken as alike consistent with Scripture, with the Westminster standards, and with the older custom of the national Church.

The Assembly came to a decision upon the reading of prayers from a book, and found that it was an innovation upon the practice of the Church, enjoining Dr. Lee to discontinue it. He did discontinue the use of the book, but continued to read his prayers from manuscript, and all the other innovations went on as before. In 1863 the Greyfriars case came up again, and a committee was appointed to inquire into the law and usage of the Church as to worship, and to report any innovations which had occurred.[1] The committee reported in 1864. It was argued by the procurator Mr. Cook, and by Dr. Hill, Mr. Phin, and others, that liturgies and instrumental music were contrary to usage, and that the Presbytery of Edinburgh should be instructed to proceed against Dr. Lee for disobedience to the decision of 1859 in continuing to read his prayers. Dr. Lee himself, Dr. Milligan, Dr. Cunningham, and others argued that no law had been violated—that the decision of 1859 had been hasty—that where no disapprobation, but, on the contrary, the strongest approbation, was manifested, the improvements should be allowed to remain. By this time the sympathy of the country and of the younger ministers of the Church was fairly aroused in favour of Dr. Lee, and by a large majority a resolution was come to that such practices should only be interfered with, when they disturbed the peace of the Church and the harmony of congregations.[2]

It was supposed that this was a final settlement of the dispute, and in this belief the advocates of improvement proceeded boldly forward. Organs began to be introduced all over the country; the service of praise was cultivated with much care, and a general order and seemliness took the place of much that had previously been bald and uncouth. But the old spirit was not extinct, and a reaction began. The Assembly of 1865

[1] Proceedings of Assembly, 1863. [2] Ibid. 1864.

returned to the subject and passed a Declaratory Act, setting forth that all matters connected with public worship must be regulated by presbyteries.[1] Dr. Lee, Dr. Norman Macleod, and Principal Tulloch strongly opposed this step, but they were for the time overruled. This legislation, however, by no means satisfied the Church, and the following year, in reply to several overtures which were laid upon the table, the Assembly passed an Act in which, after a preamble affirming the power of regulating the affairs of congregations to be vested in the presbytery, it is declared, "that while needless interference is always to be avoided, it is nevertheless the duty of presbyteries, when by any legal and constitutional means the alleged existence or proposed introduction of any innovation or novel practice, in the performance of public worship or administration of ordinances in any congregation, come to their knowledge, to take cognizance of the same, and after such inquiry as the circumstances of the case may seem to call for, or without inquiry, if none appears requisite, either to enjoin the discontinuance or prohibit the introduction of such innovation or novel practice, as being in their opinion inconsistent with the laws and settled usages of the Church, or a cause of division in the particular congregation, or as being unfit from any cause to be used in the worship of God, either in general or in the particular kirks; or to find that no case has been stated to them calling for their interference; or to pronounce such other deliverance in the matter as in their judgment seems warranted by the circumstances of the case, and the laws and usages of the Church." This is the last legislation upon the subject of innovations, and is the law of the Church at the present day.

Dr. Lee did not long survive this settlement. His own case, being regarded as disobedience to the injunction of the Assembly of 1859, was still pressed against him. He felt the harsh things that were said of him very keenly. A week before the Assembly of 1867 met, he published a letter to the members in which he vindicated his position with much learning and dignity. But the day before it was to be convened, riding home from a visit in the country, he was seen to fall from his

[1] Acts of Assembly, 1865.

horse. He was carried home struck down with paralysis, and although he lingered for a year, he never appeared in public again. The case came to an end, and the rancour with which he was so unjustly assailed was buried with him in his grave. But it is not too much to say, that the movement he inaugurated so wisely and so bravely has been of unspeakable advantage to the Church. A taste for seemly architecture, and befitting solemnity in the conduct of public worship, has taken possession of the public mind, and is zealously fostered by the younger clergy. The changes which Dr. Lee introduced, and which excited so much alarm and opposition, are now almost everywhere adopted. Presbyteries hardly ever interfere when an organ is to be introduced, for that is now so common an event that it has ceased to be an innovation; the more cultured are being drawn back to the worship of the Church of Scotland; the less cultured are being willingly educated into propriety in their devotions; and the Church has a still stronger hold than ever before upon the affections of rich and poor alike, since her liberality and common sense have once more been apparent in being the first of the great religious bodies, in Scotland, to accommodate her practices and her ritual to a natural and seemly culture. All honour to the memory of the chivalrous divine who so nobly vindicated the Church's right and duty.

Two movements which have had an important influence upon the worship of the Church were the outcome of what is known as the "innovations controversy."

The first of these was private, and not directly under the cognizance of the church courts. It was the formation of an association for liturgical study, and the preparation of prayers and other forms for the celebration of the public offices of the Church. It was originated by a few ministers and elders, who had become impressed with the idea that the devotional exercises of the sanctuary had received too little attention from those whose duty it was to conduct them, and that they were capable of being rendered much more perfect. With this end in view they gave themselves to the study of devotional literature, ancient and modern, and as the result of some years of labour, they published a book of Common Order, under the title of "Euchologion," containing forms for the various services which

it is the duty of the clergy of the Church of Scotland from time to time to conduct. The society at first consisted of a few churchmen, who sympathized generally with the movement inaugurated by Dr. Lee. It was consequently regarded by those who did not participate in this sentiment with much suspicion. Those who regarded all change as inimical to the purity of the Church looked upon the association as a secret society, whose object was to foster all sorts of innovations, perhaps even to introduce an unauthorized liturgy. The society, however, kept on its course. The volume originally issued under its auspices has passed through several editions, and although it is not often openly read in the conduct of the public services, it is largely referred to by the younger ministers in the preparation of their prayers. The book itself is not incapable of improvement; but it is being re-cast and perfected in every successive edition that appears; and its great use has been to furnish simple and devotional modes of public prayer in an accessible form, which have largely contributed to create a truer idea in the minds of the clergy of what a public service ought to be, and very materially to elevate and enrich the worship of the Church. It is now universally seen and admitted that this is the object of the society. More than a third of the ministers of the Church, and many elders and Christian laymen, are now numbered in its membership; and instead of being regarded with jealousy and distrust, its work is fully appreciated and gratefully acknowledged, not only by the great majority of the members of the Church of Scotland, but by the community at large.

The other movement, bearing upon the worship of the Church, has affected the service of praise. For many years the only medium permitted to congregations was the metrical version of the Psalms, which was composed chiefly by Francis Rous, a member of the House of Commons in 1647, and a lay delegate to the Westminster Assembly. He had borrowed largely from a version known as that of King James, but which was in reality the production of Sir William Alexander of Menstrie, afterwards created Earl of Stirling. A committee of the General Assembly of 1648 was appointed to revise this version, and to make what use they could of the version of the Laird of Row-

allan and of Zachary Boyd.[1] The result of their labours was the version of the Psalms now in use in the Church, and which, although in some parts rough and grotesque, is on the whole so full of dignity, and often of pathos and beauty, that it has justly commended itself to the religious tastes of the people; and even so great an authority as Sir Walter Scott refused to be a party to any revisal of it.[2] About the middle of the eighteenth century, however, a feeling began to prevail that there were many passages both in the Old and New Testaments which were capable of being paraphrased, so as to be admirably adapted for the praises of the sanctuary. In 1742 the Assembly appointed a committee to collect and prepare metrical translations and paraphrases of portions of the sacred writings.[3] It was not till 1751, however, that any outcome of their work was visible; but at that Assembly a collection of forty-five paraphrases was laid upon the table and sent down to presbyteries for their approval, and in the meantime it was recommended that they should be used by families in their household worship.[4] No further step was taken till 1775, when an overture came before the Assembly from the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, asking that ministers who chose to do so should be allowed to use the paraphrases in public worship. The subject was therefore again opened up, and a committee appointed to revise and enlarge the collection. Six years afterwards they reported to the Assembly that they "had now prepared such a collection of sacred hymns as might be submitted to the judgment of the Church." They received a temporary sanction, and were sent down to presbyteries in terms of the Barrier Act. Apparently, however, the presbyteries had been dilatory in sending up their returns; for this is the last we hear of the paraphrases. There is no Act of Assembly making the temporary sanction permanent. They made way, however, in virtue no doubt of their own intrinsic beauty; and although many of the older ministers never used them, they were very largely adopted in public worship when the first quarter of the present century had come to a close.

The discussions upon innovations, however, created a desire

[1] Cunningham's "History," ii. 155, 156. [2] Lockhart's "Life of Scott."
[3] Morren's "Annals of the Assembly," i. 34, 35. [4] Acts of Assembly, Abridgment, 706.

for a more extensive collection of the materials for praise. The hymnology of the Church universal was at the disposal of the Church of Scotland. Why, it was argued, should it not be made available? Objections were taken to this step in certain quarters, but the tendency towards culture in the conduct of the public services was now too decided to be effectually hindered. A committee was appointed, with Dr. Arnot of the High Church, Edinburgh, and Dr. Boyd of St. Andrews, as joint conveners. Under their guidance, and on the death of Dr. Arnot under that of Dr. Boyd, the committee proceeded with its work, and in 1863 it had the satisfaction of securing the approval of the Assembly for the first edition of the hymnal. It consisted of two hundred hymns, and it speedily came into very general use. As time passed on the wish for a still larger collection came to be widely felt, and in 1884 the Assembly sanctioned the magnificent collection compiled by the same committee, and which is now so well known and generally admired as the "Scottish Hymnal." The words were set to appropriate tunes, arranged by Dr. A. L. Peace, the organist of Glasgow Cathedral. The committee had previously issued a book of anthems, and a Psalter pointed and adapted for chanting. No religious community could desire a more perfect channel for the expression of its public praise than the Church of Scotland now possesses in these works.

In 1872 an Act of Parliament was passed by which the old parish school system was brought to an end. It had conferred very great benefits on the country, at a very small cost, which fell almost entirely on the heritors. But the long and persistent agitation for a more elaborate educational systen told unmistakably that the day of the parish schools was past. The present very complete, but also very expensive, system has taken the place of the one which did such faithful work for so many generations. It has greatly added to the emoluments of the teachers, who were miserably underpaid under the former *régime*, and its compulsory clauses are a wholesome and most needful discipline of old as well as young. Many are still of opinion, however, that an extension of the parochial system and its adaptation to present day requirements were all that was required, at least in the country districts. The new Act has,

however, relieved the parish clergy of a very arduous duty, which they cheerfully discharged, and which it is universally admitted they fulfilled with credit to themselves and with advantage to the people.

When Lord Aberdeen's Benefices Act was fairly tried, it was not found to work well. The Moderate party, it will be remembered, had objected to any legislation in the direction of that measure, believing that the existing law and constitution of the Church were amply sufficient to meet all contingencies. The Government, however, were anxious to conciliate the middle party, who strongly urged that some measure should be passed, and the Benefices Act was the consequence. It admitted of no objection to "life" or "doctrine," as had been allowed under the old system. Objections in such cases must be followed out by libel. It was only to a presentee's "literature" that objectors could take exception; and the "suitableness" of the presentee to the parish, "having regard to the number and character of the objectors," if there were any, was left to be dealt with by the presbytery. The effect of the long contest from which the Church emerged in 1843, was again to throw the ecclesiastical machinery as to presentations into the utmost confusion. The people had been educated into the demand for popular rights. They delighted in the excitement of the election of a minister, and in the importance it conferred upon them for the time. Not a few, also, in every congregation were sincerely anxious to be satisfied that the person who was to be placed over them in sacred things, should be one to whom they could confidently entrust their own spiritual welfare and that of those dear to them. In almost every case it came to be the custom for the people to ask the patron to permit them to have their own choice. Very frequently this was done. But there was no definite rule as to how the people were to proceed, and often they disagreed amongst themselves, and unseemly disputes took place. When the patron exercised his right absolutely, the people regarded themselves as badly used, and frequently they laid themselves out to discover some objection, which they might prefer against the man who had been presented to them. These objections were often frivolous, or were not founded on good grounds. Some of the most promising licentiates, and some

who were well-known, even eminent, ministers were subjected to these harassing objections. Long and expensive processes took place before the church courts. The most grotesque allegations as to the unfortunate presentee were often made. If after a long litigation he was at last settled in the parish, he found himself burdened with an incubus of debt which would hamper him ever afterwards, and with an opposition and dislike to him on the part of his parishioners which their struggle had intensified, and which his best exertions would perhaps never enable him entirely to overcome.

These cases were occurring so repeatedly, and were so detrimental to the Church, that at last it became evident to the more thoughtful of her ministers that some remedy must be sought. But it was not easy to say what that should be. To repeal Lord Aberdeen's Act, and to fall back on the constitution of the Church, as the Moderate party would have desired, would be an outrage upon the feelings of the middle party. To legalize the Veto would be offensive to the Moderate party, who had protested against that system as not only illegal, but as unjust. At last it began to appear that there was no middle course. Patronage must be got rid of altogether. Its value to the patrons was now very small, for no one could tell whether his presentee would be accepted or not. The Moderate party had protested against it for many years during last century. They could not reasonably oppose its abolition now. The agitation was protracted. Dr. Lee and Dr. Pirie, who were stoutly opposed on the subject of innovations, were cordially at one on that of patronage. It was after Dr. Lee's death that the movement became pronounced. The Moderate party, with Dr. John Cook of Haddington as their leader, would hear no argument against the system. It had worked well on the whole; and popular election was a leap in the dark. Many of the middle party opposed the project also. But the tide in favour of it gradually rose. It was essentially a popular movement. It was even whispered that it might bring back the Free Church, or at least many of that body. At length, in 1869, the General Assembly, by a large majority, condemned patronage as restored by Queen Anne, and resolved to petition Parliament for its abolition. Mr. Gladstone's government was then in power, and

knowing the disfavour with which the movement was regarded by their dissenting allies in Scotland, they declined to help it on. In 1874 Mr. Disraeli was in office, and a Bill was introduced and carried through Parliament, abolishing patronage and vesting the election of ministers in the communicants and adherents of the Church. The Assembly framed regulations for the guidance of congregations in exercising their duty. The law has now been in operation for fifteen years, and although not without its defects, it has worked fairly well, and doubtless may work still better as the Church is educated in its use. It has not brought back the Free Church to the fold of the National Zion. Those who expected any such result must have been strangely oblivious of the history of the controversy which ended in the secession. It was upon the question of so-called spiritual independence that the seceders left the Church. They could hardly be expected to confound two things which were totally distinct, and to believe that their real grievance was now removed, when, in point of fact, it was never touched. So the leaders felt and argued, and they were consistent in doing so. But the mass of the people, in many cases, had evidently got all they wanted when they got rid of patronage. We can hardly otherwise account for the very great increase to the membership of the Church, which has gone on steadily since the ancient grievance was done away with.

The old question of creed subscription came up simultaneously with the discussions upon patronage. At first it was confined to the discussion of how far the lay elders ought to be required to subscribe so minute a document as the Westminster Confession, embodying a system of doctrine which even theological experts might scarcely be supposed fully to grasp. It was said that there was no statute law imposing such subscription upon elders, and that what the Church herself had required she could of her own authority remit. It was a mockery, also, to ask simple men, who were nevertheless often admirably fitted for the work of the eldership in rustic congregations, to express their assent to a document which probably they had never read, and which, if they did, they could not understand. Dr. Story, then of Rosneath, now professor of church history in Glasgow, advanced to the charge in the Assembly again and again, but

without substantial success. At last his proposals were defeated by so decided a majority that the subject was allowed to lie over for some years. It was silently working its way, nevertheless, and when it was renewed, the question of ministerial subscription was by common consent conjoined with that of the subscription of the eldership. A modified formula was drawn up and, on the motion of Dr. Gloag and Principal Cunningham, sent down to presbyteries for approval. The almost unanimous voice was in favour of its adoption, and by the Assembly of 1889 a formula of subscription was made the law of the Church, which afforded both clergy and elders a long desired relief.

The internal and missionary affairs of the Church are being prosecuted with unprecedented vigour. In addition to the committees which have for so long been in operation, a committee upon practical religion—"Christian life and work"—was inaugurated about twenty years ago, and is ceaselessly occupied in the effort to gather Christian activity into a focus, and to give it system and unity. It has originated a monthly magazine with a circulation of upwards of 100,000. It has organized a great Young Men's Guild, which has branches in most of the parishes of Scotland; it has induced the Assembly to institute the old Scriptural order of Deaconesses, hitherto unheard of in the Church of Scotland; and it seeks to regulate, guide, and instruct the great band of Christian women who render efficient help in the Christian cause. In all social questions, such as temperance, the housing of the poor, the provision of healthful recreation for the working classes, and the reclaiming of the lapsed, the Church is taking her part faithfully and well. Her missions are flourishing in all parts of the colonial empire; and to those in India, the scene of her early work, she has added great centres of mission life in Africa and China. The churches are again filled to overflowing, where the secession had often left them empty. Her membership is now 587,954 communicants,[1] and her Christian liberality is in proportion to her numbers.

But the prosperity of the Church is not regarded with complacency by those who have separated from her. The United Presbyterian Church is confessedly opposed to the Establish-

[1] Report on Statistics to Assembly of 1890.

ment, on principle. The Free Church, which professed to hold the Establishment principle at the secession of 1843, has abandoned it, as was natural in a church which must of necessity be practically Voluntary. A decided and vigorous effort for the disestablishment of the Church was made by both, in 1885, when the country roused herself, and let her voice be heard in no unmistakable manner in favour of the Old Kirk. Baffled for the time, her foes are, however, as active as ever, and their hostility is not to be despised.

The Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church spent nearly ten years, from 1863 to 1873, in a fruitless effort to unite, which was frustrated by the consistency of a party in the former, which uncompromisingly declared against the Voluntary principle. There are symptoms that the negotiations may shortly be renewed.

The Free Church has been taught by the well-known Cardross case (which is referred to at length in the dissertation on the Church in its Relation to the Law, in this work), that the imperial power she claimed is mythical in any well-regulated state, and that she, or any other Church, can only deal with her ministers and members in terms of her own constitution. The Church, on the other hand, has been again and again confirmed in her assertion that, within her own constitution, and acting in conformity with her contract with the State, her spiritual independence is sacredly protected; and no sentence that she can pronounce can be reviewed by the civil court.

The exertions of the two great bodies of dissenters, although in one sense greatly to their credit, have nevertheless resulted in the erection of churches which in many places are not required, and in the settlement of ministers where there is no adequate sphere for them, while the great centres of population are under-manned.

Why should this state of things be permitted to continue? Why should the zealous band of Christian dissenters insist upon secularizing the ancient provision for the maintenance of ordinances, which has for so long a time been the rightful inheritance of the poor?

Surely, when so little separates the Church of Scotland from the dissenting churches, when they have so much in common

in ancient tradition and the records of the past, when the days of the secessions are so far left behind, it were the part of wise and Christian men to forget their differences, and, without asking of their neighbours anything that should violate their conscientious convictions, or abandoning what they themselves deem essential, to devote themselves to the sacred work of devising a way by which these miserable differences should be adjusted, and Scotland should once more be blessed with a united National Church. There are those, in growing numbers in all the churches, who long for such a result, and who see no insuperable difficulty to hinder it. May God strengthen their convictions, and hasten the great end in His own way.

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